





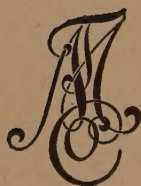
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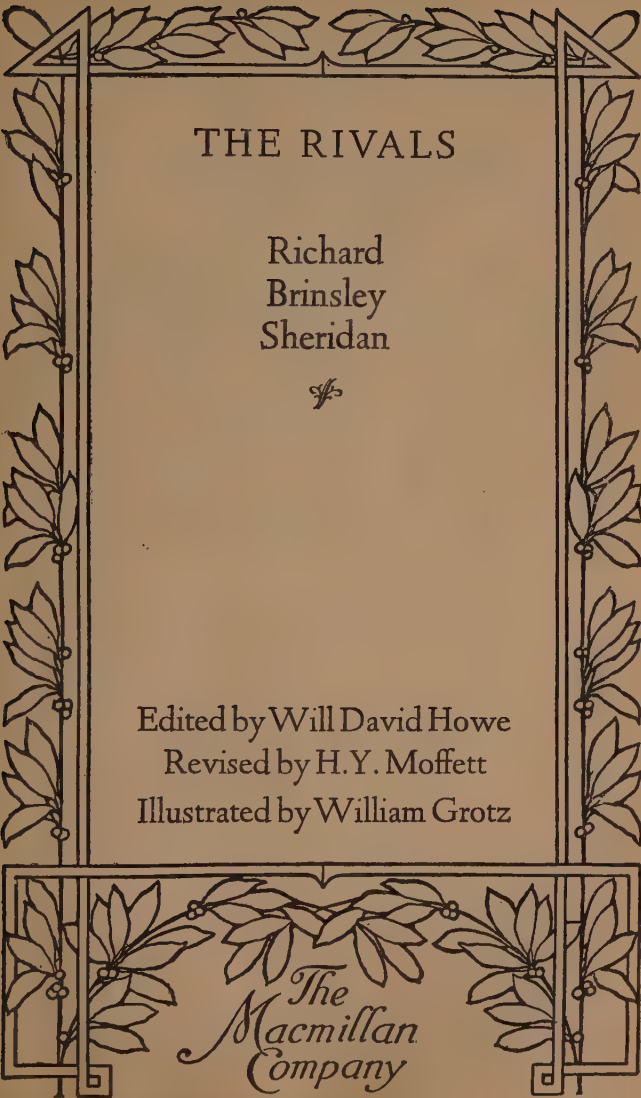
The Rivals

2





... that sprightly grace and insinuating manner of yours will do some mischief among the girls here.



THE RIVALS

Richard
Brinsley
Sheridan



Edited by Will David Howe

Revised by H.Y. Moffett

Illustrated by William Grotz

*The
Macmillan
Company*

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INTRODUCTION

LIFE OF SHERIDAN

The first bearer of the Sheridan name in whom we are interested is Dr. Thomas Sheridan, clergyman and schoolmaster at Dublin in the first part of the eighteenth century, connected with literary history through his friendship with Dean Jonathan Swift. The son of this Dr. Sheridan, also called Thomas, was born in Dublin in 1719, was trained at Westminster School and Trinity College, Dublin, and was intended by his parents for the ministry. However, young Thomas Sheridan, ardently fond of public speaking and the theatre, turned to the stage as the best training-school for his talents. As a capable actor and manager of the Theatre Royal in Dublin, he rendered worthy service to the English drama of the time. Frances Chamberlaine, who became the wife of Thomas Sheridan and the mother of the great dramatist, was born of English parents at Dublin in 1724. She was widely recognized as a woman of accomplishment and of literary distinction.

The family moved to England and made their home in London, where they moved in the literary circles which included such men as Richardson, Samuel Johnson, and Goldsmith. In England Sheridan exerted his talents as actor, lecturer, and scholar, being granted a pension in recognition of his labors upon a pronouncing dictionary. Unfortunately, the abilities of Thomas Sheridan did

not include skill in the handling of financial matters; in this respect, as we shall see, his son resembled him.

To these parents was born at 12 Dorset Street, Dublin, on the 30th of October, 1751, Richard Brinsley Sheridan. In 1762 young Richard went to Harrow, where he showed no particular scholarship, but won the respect of teachers and companions. The years at Harrow were a period of happiness to Richard, if not of intellectual profit, but of considerable distress to the father, who in true Sheridan fashion buried himself even more deeply in debt. In 1766, while Richard was still at Harrow, the mother died. A little later, in 1769, the father brought together his four children in London and secured for the boys instruction in mathematics and classics.

In the following year the family moved to Bath, then in a particular degree the most famous city of England. As a health resort, known throughout Europe, it attracted all classes—the sick who hoped for health from its waters, the indolent who wished to be amused, the people of society and dress who coveted a more than local distinction, and, finally, rascals of all sorts: thieves, fortune-hunters, gamblers, who naturally flocked to such a place for personal profit. Into this busy world the Sheridans entered, and Richard found at once his place.

Then began the career of the young man. First, were rich plans, then numerous attempts, and, later, failures and success. There were early pieces, chiefly in collaboration with Nathaniel Halhed, a friend of Sheridan at Harrow; a farce, *Ixion*, written by Halhed and revised by Sheridan with the title, *Jupiter*; a periodical called *Hernan's Miscel-*

lany, which never was published; a translation in verse of the *Love Epistles of Aristænetus*—none of which are important.

In 1773, Sheridan, in quite romantic fashion, married Elizabeth Linley, distinguished as an amateur singer and musician. Certain incidents of this episode find close correspondence to the play, *The Rivals*. After the marriage, the Sheridans lived happily in seclusion in a country cottage.

It was in January, 1775, that Sheridan's fame really began, for in that month was produced at Covent Garden his first comedy, *The Rivals*. Though the play on the first night met a rather unfortunate reception, on every subsequent occasion it has had nothing but success. In May of the same year appeared *St. Patrick's Day*, or *The Scheming Lieutenant*, a two-act farce, which the author wrote for a benefit performance. In the following November Sheridan produced, again at Covent Garden, a comic opera called *Duenna*. This comedy at once became popular, and with *The Rivals* secured national recognition for the author.

When Sheridan, in 1776, assumed the control of Drury Lane Theatre, he began his career as manager. This was the first of many brilliant schemes which the dramatist conceived in unbounded enthusiasm and which went to destruction in the hands of the rash and incompetent business man. For the new management Sheridan adopted Vanbrugh's Restoration Comedy, *The Relapse*, and produced it under the title, *A Trip to Scarborough*. This was followed in May by *The School for Scandal*, which at once took rank with *The Rivals*. Then came the last important play, *The Critic*, or *A Tragedy Rehearsal*. With the exception of two

subsequent adaptations, *The Stranger* (1798) and *Pizarro* (1799), Sheridan's dramatic career was closed with the production of *The Critic*.

After this glorious triumph in the drama, with an increasing reputation for ready wit and genial amiability, Sheridan would seem to have reached the zenith of popularity. And yet his sun had only begun to rise. The Sheridans had always coveted distinction as orators. It was natural, then, that Richard Sheridan, the great and famous dramatist, should turn to Parliament for further glory. Fortune smiled upon his ambition, and in 1780 the dramatist and theatre-manager began the new career, even more rich, if possible, in splendid achievement. It was the beginning of a series of triumphs as orator and statesman that scarcely finds its parallel in English history. From his first effort to his most brilliant speeches in the Warren Hastings trial, Sheridan showed himself the peer of Fox, Burke, and Pitt in a time full of great orators and great statesmen.

The testimony of Macaulay, in his *Essay on Warren Hastings*, and of men prominent in public life at that time, clearly reveals to us the tremendous impression made upon England by Sheridan's brilliant oratory. His first speech regarding Hastings (February 7, 1787) considered the Begums of Oude, one of the provinces of India, over which Hastings had had control. Contemporaries lavished words of praise upon this speech. Burke declared it "unequalled by anything." Pitt acknowledged that "an abler speech had, perhaps, never been delivered." Sir Gilbert Elliot, another member of Parliament, wrote to his wife on the day following Sheridan's speech: "This last night, though the House was up soon after one, and I was in bed

before two, I have not slept *one wink*. Nothing whatever was the matter with me, except the impression of what had been passing still vibrating on my brain. . . . Sheridan spoke exactly five hours and a half, with such fluency and rapidity that I think his speech could not be read in double the time. You may imagine the quantity of matter it contained. It was by many degrees the most excellent and astonishing performance I ever heard, and surpasses all I ever imagined possible in eloquence and ability. This is the *universal* sense of all who heard it. You will conceive how admirable it was when I tell you that he surpassed, I think, Pitt, Fox, and even Burke, in his finest and most brilliant orations." (See *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot, first Earl of Minto*, Vol. I, p. 123.)

In June, 1788, came Sheridan's speech in the actual trial of Hastings. In the opinion of many this second speech did not approach the success of the first, while others felt that their highest expectations were gratified.

During his great popularity, Sheridan retained the management of Drury Lane, but was fast losing money and prestige. His life was saddened by the death of Mrs. Sheridan in 1792. Though he afterwards married again, he never recovered from the loss of the woman whose grace and charm and sympathetic companionship had meant so much to the sometimes wayward, yet always devoted, husband. Then troubles seemed to come "in battalions"—the death of his infant daughter, Mary, financial ruin, an unfortunate friendship with the dissolute Prince of Wales, intrigue which effected his political downfall, and finally, the burning of Drury Lane on the 24th of February, 1809. Nothing remained, then, to the man who had been a nation's

idol but neglect and ruin. Creditors pressed upon him, arrested him for debt, threw him into a spunging-house, and left him alone to die on July 7, 1816.

As is not uncommon in this fickle world in which we live, Sheridan was carried forth from the hovel, where all was mean and loathsome, and borne to England's great sepulchre by the most distinguished men of his time, and accompanied to his resting-place in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey by a procession that would have done honor even to a British sovereign.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan was a typical product of the eighteenth century. Graceful and charming in society, witty and amiable in conversation, versatile in achievement, he won deservedly great fame as man, dramatist, orator, and statesman. He was a devoted husband, a sincere friend, and a brilliant author and orator. On the other hand, like many of the men of his time, he was generous to a fault, and was possessed of a rashness and improvidence in money matters that worked his ruin.

SOME WORDS UPON THE ENGLISH DRAMA

A few words about the drama may not be out of place now when we are interested in this particular literary form. We all know more or less definitely certain facts of the development of the English drama. We have been amazed at the richness of the Elizabethan plays in the portrayal of many varied characters, in the handling of complicated situations, in passages of real poetic beauty, in the presentation in artistic form of great and permanent themes. Of course, a few men like Greene, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, and Web-

ster were superior, and yet we are surprised to find in the plays of many other contemporary playwrights unusual passages and a certain feeling for artistic effects. Such an observation induces one to conclude, with Symonds, that the characteristics of the age were *enthusiasm, spontaneity, and versatility*.

It is interesting to conjecture what would have happened to the theatre had the Puritan influence not borne down upon it and closed all the playhouses in 1642; but we can see what *did* happen. Springing up in the Restoration period, the drama had a new character. It had divested itself of its Elizabethan garb, and rapidly and eagerly sought to take on all the character of that superficial and corrupt court. Women entered upon the stage as actors; the greatest license was tolerated in the choice of subject and the use of language; the costumes became more elaborate; the playhouses were lavishly adorned. In place of the richness of imagination, the purity of atmosphere, the splendid poetry, the humor, and the morality of the Elizabethan plays, the Restoration drama offered clever wit, fashionable repartée, and plots of domestic scandal and social intrigue.

No one wonders that there should arise men like Jeremy Collier who were determined to strip off the disguise from the drama of the day and leave it in its real ugliness, to be despised and rejected by the rising middle classes who were henceforth, in the coming century, to effect such mighty reforms. Again the pendulum swung to the further side. This time we were left with the *sentimental comedy*, a form of play which tried to substitute humor and sentiment for wit and vulgarity. Richard Steele's plays are representative of this extreme. Indeed,

the whole eighteenth century of drama and novel was pervaded by this excessive sentimentality.

As a reaction against this form of play came the work of Goldsmith and Sheridan, just as in novel-writing Fielding came to react against Richardson and Sterne. These men again went out into the pure sunshine and saw life whole, saw its weakness and its strength, its joys and sorrows, its reality and its superficiality. We are again in the region of pure comedy, perhaps not so profound and significant as that of Shakespeare, but certainly real and inspiring.

THE RIVALS

The Rivals will probably always remain the most popular of Sheridan's plays. The abundance of wit and pervasive humor, the ingenious grouping of the characters, and the heartiness of the fun from first to last will help to keep the play alive forever.

The facts of the initial failure of *The Rivals* have been clearly presented by Professor Nettleton in the introduction to his admirable edition of the *Major Dramas of Sheridan*. That Sheridan himself saw the reasons for this failure and profited by the lesson the student will see in reading the *Author's Preface*. The play was withdrawn, revised, and recast, and on its second performance scored great success.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

TO THE EDITION OF 1775

A PREFACE to a play seems generally to be considered as a kind of closet-prologue, in which—if his piece has been successful—the author solicits that indulgence from the reader which he had before experienced from the audience: but as the scope and immediate object of a play is to please a mixed assembly in *representation* (whose judgment in the theatre at least is decisive) its degree of reputation is usually as determined as public, before it can be prepared for the cooler tribunal of the study. Thus any farther solicitude on the part of the writer becomes unnecessary at least, if not an intrusion: and if the piece has been condemned in the performance, I fear an address to the closet, like an appeal to posterity, is constantly regarded as the procrastination of a suit, from a consciousness of the weakness of the cause. From these considerations, the following comedy would certainly have been submitted to the reader, without any further introduction than what it had in the representation, but that its success has probably been founded on a circumstance which the author is informed has not before attended a theatrical trial, and which consequently ought not to pass unnoticed.

I need scarcely add, that the circumstance alluded to was the withdrawing of the piece,^o to remove those imperfections in the first representation which were too obvious to escape reprehension, and too numerous to admit of a hasty correction. There are few writers, I believe, who, even in the fullest consciousness of error, do not wish to palliate the faults which they acknowledge; and, however trifling the performance, to second their confession of its deficiencies, by whatever plea seems least disgraceful to their ability. In the present instance, it cannot be said to amount either to candour or modesty in me, to acknowledge an extreme inexperience and want of judgment on matters, in which, without guidance from practice, or spur from success, a young man should scarcely boast of being an adept. If it be said, that under such disadvantages no one should attempt to write a play—I must beg leave to dissent from the position, while the first point of experience that I have gained on the subject is, a knowledge of the candour and judgment with which an impartial public distinguishes between the errors of inexperience and incapacity, and the indulgence which it shows even to a disposition to remedy the defects of either.

It were unnecessary to enter into any farther extenuation of what was thought exceptionable in this play, but that it has been said, that the managers should have prevented some of the defects before its appearance to the public—and in particular the uncommon length of the piece as represented the first night. It were an ill return for the most liberal and gentlemanly conduct on their side,

to suffer any censure to rest where none was deserved. Hurry in writing has long been exploded as an excuse for an author;—however, in the dramatic line, it may happen, that both an author and a manager may wish to fill a chasm in the entertainment of the public with a hastiness not altogether culpable. The season was advanced when I first put the play into Mr. Harris's^o hands:—it was at that time at least double the length of any acting comedy. I profited by his judgment and experience in the curtailment of it—till, I believe, his feeling for the vanity of a young author got the better of his desire for correctness, and he left many excrescences remaining, because he had assisted in pruning so many more. Hence, though I was not uninformed that the acts were still too long, I flattered myself that, after the first trial, I might with safer judgment proceed to remove what should appear to have been most dissatisfactory. Many other errors there were, which might in part have arisen from my being by no means conversant with plays in general, either in reading or at the theatre.—Yet I own that, in one respect, I did not regret my ignorance: for as my first wish in attempting a play was to avoid every appearance of plagiarism, I thought I should stand a better chance of effecting this from being in a walk which I had not frequented, and where consequently the progress of invention was less likely to be interrupted by starts of recollection: for on subjects on which the mind has been much informed, invention is slow of exerting itself.—Faded ideas float in the fancy like half-forgotten dreams; and the imagina-

tion in its fullest enjoyments becomes suspicious of its offspring, and doubts whether it has created or adopted.

With regard to some particular passages which on the first night's representation seemed generally disliked, I confess, that if I felt any emotion of surprise at the disapprobation, it was not that they were disapproved of, but that I had not before perceived that they deserved it. As some part of the attack on the piece was begun too early to pass for the sentence of *judgment*, which is ever tardy in condemning, it has been suggested to me, that much of the disapprobation must have arisen from virulence of malice, rather than severity of criticism: but as I was more apprehensive of there being just grounds to excite the latter, than conscious of having deserved the former, I continue not to believe that probable, which I am sure must have been unprovoked. However, if it was so, and I could even mark the quarter from whence it came, it would be ungenerous to retort; for no passion suffers more than malice from disappointment. For my own part, I see no reason why the author of a play should not regard a first night's audience as a candid and judicious friend attending, in behalf of the public, at his last rehearsal. If he can dispense with flattery, he is sure at least of sincerity, and even though the annotation be rude, he may rely upon the justness of the comment. Considered in this light, that audience, whose *fat* is essential to the poet's claim, whether his object be fame or profit, has surely a right to expect some

deference to its opinion, from principles of politeness at least, if not from gratitude.

As for the little puny critics, who scatter their peevish strictures in private circles, and scribble at every author who has the eminence of being unconnected with them, as they are usually spleen-swollen from a vain idea of increasing their consequence, there will always be found a petulance and illiberality in their remarks, which should place them as far beneath the notice of a gentleman, as their original dulness had sunk them from the level of the most unsuccessful author.

It is not without pleasure that I catch at an opportunity of justifying myself from the charge of intending any national reflection in the character of Sir Lucius O'Trigger. If any gentleman opposed the piece from that idea, I thank them sincerely for their opposition; and if the condemnation of this comedy (however misconceived the provocation) could have added one spark to the decaying flame of national attachment to the country supposed to be reflected on, I should have been happy in its fate; and might with truth have boasted, that it had done more real service in its failure, than the successful morality of a thousand stage-novels will ever effect.

It is usual, I believe, to thank the performers in a new play, for the exertion of their several abilities. But where (as in this instance) their merit has been so striking and uncontroverted, as to call for the warmest and truest applause from a number of judicious audiences, the poet's after-praise comes

like the feeble acclamation of a child to close the shouts of a multitude. The conduct, however, of the principals in a theatre cannot be so apparent to the public. I think it therefore but justice to declare, that from this theatre (the only one I can speak of from experience) those writers who wish to try the dramatic line will meet with that candour and liberal attention, which are generally allowed to be better calculated to lead genius into excellence, than either the precepts of judgment, or the guidance of experience.

THE AUTHOR

THE RIVALS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

AS ORIGINALLY ACTED AT COVENT-GARDEN THEATRE^o IN 1775

SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE	<i>Mr. Shuter</i>
CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE	<i>Mr. Woodward</i>
FAULKLAND	<i>Mr. Lewis</i>
ACRES	<i>Mr. Quick</i>
SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER	<i>Mr. Lee</i>
FAG	<i>Mr. Lee Lewes</i>
DAVID	<i>Mr. Dunstal</i>
THOMAS	<i>Mr. Fearon</i>
MRS. MALAPROP	<i>Mrs. Green</i>
LYDIA LANGUISH	<i>Miss Barsanti</i>
JULIA	<i>Mrs. Bulkley</i>
LUCY	<i>Mrs. Lessingham</i>

Maid, Boy, Servants, &c.

SCENE: *Bath*

Time of Action, within one day.

THE RIVALS

A COMEDY

PROLOGUE

BY THE AUTHOR

SPOKEN BY MR. WOODWARD AND MR. QUICK

Enter SERJEANT-AT-LAW and ATTORNEY following and giving a paper

SERJEANT. What's here!—a vile cramp hand! I cannot see
Without my spectacles.

ATTORNEY. He means his fee.
Nay, Mr. Serjeant, good sir, try again.
[Gives money.]

SERJEANT. The scrawl improves! [more] O come, 'tis pretty plain.
Hey! how's this? Dibble!—sure it cannot be! 5
A poet's brief! a poet and a fee!

ATTORNEY. Yes, sir! though you without reward, I know,
Would gladly plead the Muse's cause.

SERJEANT. So!—so!

ATTORNEY. And if the fee offends, your wrath
should fall

On me.

SERJEANT. Dear Dibble, no offence at all. 10

ATTORNEY. Some sons of Phœbus^o in the
courts we meet—

SERJEANT. And fifty sons of Phœbus in the
Fleet^o!

ATTORNEY. Nor pleads he worse, who with
a decent sprig

Of bays^o adorns his legal waste of wig.

SERJEANT. Full-bottomed heroes thus, on
signs, unfurl 15

A leaf of laurel in a grove of curl!

Yet tell your client, that, in adverse days,

This wig is warmer than a bush of bays.

ATTORNEY. Do you, then, sir, my client's
place supply,

Profuse of robe, and prodigal of tie—— 20

Do you, with all those blushing powers of face,

And wonted bashful hesitating grace,

Rise in the court, and flourish on the case.

[*Exit*

SERJEANT. For practice then suppose—this
brief will show it,—

Me, Serjeant Woodward,—counsel for the
poet. 25

Used to the ground, I know 'tis hard to deal

With this dread court, from whence there's no
appeal;

No tricking here, to blunt the edge of law,
Or, damned in equity, escape by flaw:
But judgment given, your sentence must re-
main;

30

No writ of error lies—to Drury-lane!
Yet when so kind you seem, 'tis past dispute
We gain some favour, if not costs of suit.
No spleen is here! I see no hoarded fury;—
I think I never faced a milder jury!
Sad else our plight! where frowns are trans-
portation,

35

A hiss the gallows, and a groan damnation!
But such the public candour, without fear
My client waives all right of challenge here.
No newsman from our session is dismissed,
Nor wit nor critic we scratch off the list;
His faults can never hurt another's ease,
His crime, at worst, a bad attempt to please:
Thus, all respecting, he appeals to all,
And by the general voice will stand or fall.

40
45

PROLOGUE

BY THE AUTHOR

SPOKEN ON THE TENTH NIGHT, BY
MRS. BULKLEY

Granted our cause, our suit and trial o'er,
The worthy serjeant need appear no more:
In pleasing I a different client choose,
He served the Poet—I would serve the Muse:
Like him, I'll try to merit your applause, 5
A female counsel in a female's cause.

Look on this form,¹—where humour, quaint
and sly,
Dimples the cheek, and points the beaming
eye;

Where gay invention seems to boast its wiles
In amorous hint, and half-triumphant smiles; 10
While her light masks or covers satire's strokes,
All hides the conscious blush her wit provokes.
Look on her well—does she seem formed to
teach?

Should you expect to hear this lady preach?
Is grey experience suited to her youth? 15

¹ Pointing to the figure of Comedy.

Do solemn sentiments become that mouth?
Bid her be grave, those lips should rebel prove
To every theme that slanders mirth or love.

Yet, thus adorned with every graceful art
To charm the fancy and yet reach the heart, 20
Must we displace her? And instead advance
The goddess of the woful countenance—
The sentimental Muse!°—Her emblems view,
The Pilgrim's Progress, and a sprig of rue!
View her—too chaste to look like flesh and
blood—

25

Primly portrayed on emblematic wood!
There, fixed in usurpation, should she stand,
She'll snatch the dagger from her sister's hand:
And having made her votaries weep a flood,
Good heaven! she'll end her comedies in
blood—

30

Bid Harry Woodward break poor Dunstal's
crown°!

Imprison Quick, and knock Ned Shuter down;
While sad Barsanti, weeping o'er the scene,
Shall stab herself—or poison Mrs. Green.

Such dire encroachments to prevent in
time,

35

Demands the critic's voice—the poet's rhyme.
Can our light scenes add strength to holy laws!
Such puny patronage but hurts the cause:
Fair virtue scorns our feeble aid to ask;
And moral truth disdains the trickster's
mask.

40

For here their favourite stands,¹ whose brow
severe
And sad, claims youth's respect, and pity's
tear;
Who, when oppress'd by foes her worth creates,
Can point a poniard at the guilt she hates.

¹ Pointing to Tragedy.

ACT I

SCENE I

A Street in Bath

COACHMAN *crosses the Stage; Enter FAG, looking after him*

FAG. What!—Thomas!—sure 'tis he?—
What!—Thomas!—Thomas!

COACHMAN. Hey! Odd's^o life!—Mr. Fag!—
give us your hand, my old fellow-servant.

FAG. Excuse my glove, Thomas!—I'm ⁵
devilish glad to see you, my lad. Why, my
prince of charioteers, you look as hearty!—but
who the deuce thought of seeing you in Bath?

COACHMAN. Sure, master, Madam Julia,
Harry, Mrs. Kate, and the postillion be all ¹⁰
come.

FAG. Indeed!

COACHMAN. Aye, master thought another
fit of the gout was coming to make him a visit;
so he'd a mind to gi't the slip, and whip! we ¹⁵
were all off at an hour's warning.

FAG. Aye, aye, hasty in everything, or it would not be Sir Anthony Absolute!

COACHMAN. But tell us, Mr. Fag, how does young master? Odd! Sir Anthony will stare 20 to see the Captain here!

FAG. I do not serve Captain Absolute now.

COACHMAN. Why sure!

FAG. At present I am employed by Ensign Beverley. 25

COACHMAN. I doubt, Mr. Fag, you ha'n't changed for the better.

FAG. I have not changed, Thomas.

COACHMAN. No! Why, didn't you say you had left young master? 30

FAG. No.—Well, honest Thomas, I must puzzle you no farther:—briefly then—Captain Absolute and Ensign Beverley are one and the same person.

COACHMAN. The devil they are! 35

FAG. So it is indeed, Thomas; and the ensign half of my master being on guard at present—the captain has nothing to do with me.

COACHMAN. So, so!—What, this is some freak, I warrant!—Do tell us, Mr. Fag, the 40 meaning o't—you know I ha' trusted you.

FAG. You'll be secret, Thomas?

COACHMAN. As a coach-horse.

FAG. Why then the cause of all this is—Love, —Love, Thomas, who (as you may get read 45

to you) has been a masquerader ever since the days of Jupiter.

COACHMAN. Aye, aye;—I guessed there was a lady in the case:—but pray, why does your master pass only for ensign?—Now if he 50 had shammed general indeed——

FAG. Ah! Thomas, there lies the mystery o' the matter. Hark'ee, Thomas, my master is in love with a lady of a very singular taste: a lady who likes him better as a half-pay en- 55 sign than if she knew he was son and heir to Sir Anthony Absolute, a baronet of three thousand a year.

COACHMAN. That is an odd taste indeed!—But has she got the stuff, Mr. Fag? Is she 60 rich, hey?

FAG. Rich!—Why, I believe she owns half the stocks! Zounds°! Thomas, she could pay the national debt as easily as I could my wash-erwoman! She has a lapdog that eats out of 65 gold,—she feeds her parrot with small pearls,—and all her thread-papers° are made of bank-notes!

COACHMAN. Bravo, faith!—Odd! I warrant she has a set of thousands° at least:—but 70 does she draw kindly with the captain?

FAG. As fond as pigeons.

COACHMAN. May one hear her name?

FAG. Miss Lydia Languish.—But there is an

old tough aunt in the way; though, by the 75
by, she has never seen my master—for we got
acquainted with Miss while on a visit in Gloucestershire.

COACHMAN. Well—I wish they were once
harnessed together in matrimony.—But 80
pray, Mr. Fag, what kind of a place is this
Bath?—I ha' heard a deal of it—here's a mort
o' merry-making, ° hey?

FAG. Pretty well, Thomas, pretty well—'tis
a good lounge; in the morning we go to the 85
pumproom° (though neither my master nor I
drink the waters); after breakfast we saunter
on the parades, or play a game at billiards; at
night we dance; but I'm tired of the place:
their regular hours stupify me—not a fiddle 90
nor a card after eleven!—However, Mr. Faulk-
land's gentleman and I keep it up a little in
private parties;—I'll introduce you there,
Thomas—you'll like him much.

COACHMAN. Sure I know Mr. Du-Peigne 95
—you know his master is to marry Madam
Julia.

FAG. I had forgot.—But, Thomas, you must
polish a little—indeed you must.—Here now—
this wig!—What the devil do you do with a 100
wig, ° Thomas?—None of the London whips of
any degree of *ton*° wear wigs now.

COACHMAN. More's the pity! more's the
pity, I say.—Odd's life! when I heard how the

lawyers and doctors had took to their own ¹⁰⁵ hair, I thought how 'twould go next:—odd rabbit it! when the fashion had got foot on the bar, I guessed 'twould mount to the box!—but 'tis all out of character, believe me, Mr. Fag: and look'ee, I'll never gi' up mine—the law- ¹¹⁰ yers and doctors may do as they will.

FAG. Well, Thomas, we'll not quarrel about that.

COACHMAN. Why, bless you, the gentlemen of the professions ben't all of a mind—for ¹¹⁵ in our village now, thoff° Jack Gauge, the exciseman, has ta'en to his carrots,° there's little Dick the farrier swears he'll never forsake his bob,° though all the college should appear with their own heads! ¹²⁰

FAG. Indeed! well said, Dick!—But hold—mark! mark! Thomas.

COACHMAN. Zooks°! 'tis the captain.—Is that the lady with him?

FAG. No, no, that is Madam Lucy, my ¹²⁵ master's mistress's maid. They lodge at that house—but I must after him to tell him the news.

COACHMAN. Odd! he's giving her money!—Well, Mr. Fag—— ¹³⁰

FAG. Good-bye, Thomas. I have an appointment in Gyde's Porch° this evening at eight; meet me there, and we'll make a little party.

[Exeunt severally]

SCENE II

*A Dressing-room in Mrs. Malaprop's
Lodgings*

LYDIA *sitting on a sofa, with a book in her hand.* LUCY, *as just returned from a message*

LUCY. Indeed, ma'am, I traversed half the town in search of it! I don't believe there's a circulating library^o in Bath I ha'n't been at.

LYDIA. And could not you get *The Reward of Constancy*? 5

LUCY. No, indeed, ma'am.

LYDIA. Nor *The Fatal Connection*?

LUCY. No, indeed, ma'am.

LYDIA. Nor *The Mistakes of the Heart*?

LUCY. Ma'am, as ill luck would have it, ¹⁰ Mr. Bull said Miss Sukey Saunter had just fetched it away.

LYDIA. Heigh-ho!—Did you inquire for *The Delicate Distress*?

LUCY. Or, *The Memoirs of Lady Wood-* ¹⁵
ford? Yes, indeed, ma'am. I asked everywhere for it; and I might have brought it from Mr. Frederick's, but Lady Slattern Lounger, who had just sent it home, had so soiled and dog's-eared it, it wa'n't fit for a Christian to read. ²⁰

LYDIA. Heigh-ho!—Yes, I always know when

Lady Slattern has been before me. She has a most observing thumb; and I believe cherishes her nails for the convenience of making marginal notes.—Well, child, what *have* you 25 brought me?

LUCY. Oh! here, ma'am.—[*Taking books from under her cloak, and from her pockets.*] This is *The Gordian Knot*,—and this *Peregrine Pickle*. Here are *The Tears of Sensibility*, 30 and *Humphrey Clinker*. This is *The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality*, written by herself, and here the second volume of *The Sentimental Journey*.

LYDIA. Heigh-ho!—What are those books 35 by the glass?

LUCY. The great one is only *The Whole Duty of Man*, where I press a few blonds,° ma'am.

LYDIA. Very well—give me the sal volatile.°

LUCY. Is it in a blue cover, ma'am? 40

LYDIA. My smelling-bottle, you simpleton!

LUCY. Oh, the drops!—here, ma'am.

LYDIA. Hold!—here's some one coming—quick! see who it is.— [Exit LUCY

Surely I heard my cousin Julia's voice. 45

Reënter LUCY

LUCY. Lud°! ma'am, here is Miss Melville.

LYDIA. Is it possible!— [Exit LUCY

Enter JULIA

LYDIA. My dearest Julia, how delighted am I!—[*Embrace.*] How unexpected was this happiness! 50

JULIA. True, Lydia—and our pleasure is the greater.—But what has been the matter?—you were denied to me at first!

LYDIA. Ah, Julia, I have a thousand things to tell you!—But first inform me what has 55 conjured you to Bath?—Is Sir Anthony here?

JULIA. He is—we are arrived within this hour!—and I suppose he will be here to wait on Mrs. Malaprop as soon as he is dressed.

LYDIA. Then before we are interrupted, let 60 me impart to you some of my distress! I know your gentle nature will sympathize with me, though your prudence may condemn me! My letters have informed you of my whole connection with Beverley; but I have lost him, 65 Julia! My aunt has discovered our intercourse by a note she intercepted, and has confined me ever since! Yet, would you believe it? she has absolutely fallen in love with a tall Irish baronet she met one night since we have been 70 here, at Lady Macshuffle's rout.°

JULIA. You jest, Lydia!

LYDIA. No, upon my word.—She really carries on a kind of correspondence with him, under a feigned name though, till she chooses 75 to be known to him;—but it is a Delia or a Celia, I assure you.

JULIA. Then, surely, she is now more indulgent to her niece.

LYDIA. Quite the contrary. Since she has ⁸⁰ discovered her own frailty, she is become more suspicious of mine. Then I must inform you of another plague!—That odious Acres is to be in Bath to-day; so that I protest I shall be teased out of all spirits!

85

JULIA. Come, come, Lydia, hope for the best—Sir Anthony shall use his interest with Mrs. Malaprop.

LYDIA. But you have not heard the worst. Unfortunately I had quarrelled with my poor ⁹⁰ Beverley, just before my aunt made the discovery, and I have not seen him since, to make it up.

JULIA. What was his offence?

LYDIA. Nothing at all!—But, I don't know ⁹⁵ how it was, as often as we had been together, we had never had a quarrel! And, somehow, I was afraid he would never give me an opportunity. So, last Thursday, I wrote a letter to myself, to inform myself that Beverley ¹⁰⁰ was at that time paying his addresses to another woman. I signed it *your friend unknown*, showed it to Beverley, charged him with his falsehood, put myself in a violent passion, and vowed I'd never see him more.

105

JULIA. And you let him depart so, and have not seen him since?

LYDIA. 'Twas the next day my aunt found the matter out. I intended only to have teased him three days and a half, and now I've lost ¹¹⁰ him forever.

JULIA. If he is as deserving and sincere as you have represented him to me, he will never give you up so. Yet consider, Lydia, you tell me he is but an ensign, and you have ¹¹⁵ thirty thousand pounds!

LYDIA. But you know I lose most of my fortune if I marry without my aunt's consent, till of age; and that is what I have determined to do, ever since I knew the penalty. Nor ¹²⁰ could I love the man who would wish to wait a day for the alternative.

JULIA. Nay, this is caprice!

LYDIA. What, does Julia tax me with caprice?—I thought her lover Faulkland had ¹²⁵ injured her to it.

JULIA. I do not love even *his* faults.

LYDIA. But apropos—You have sent to him, I suppose?

JULIA. Not yet, upon my word—nor has ¹³⁰ he the least idea of my being in Bath. Sir Anthony's resolution was so sudden, I could not inform him of it.

LYDIA. Well, Julia, you are your own mistress (though under the protection of Sir ¹³⁵ Anthony), yet have you, for this long year, been a slave to the caprice, the whim, the jeal-



William Grotz

There, Sir Anthony, there sits the deliberate simpleton
who wants to disgrace her family.

ousy of this ungrateful Faulkland, who will ever delay assuming the right of a husband, while you suffer him to be equally imperious ¹⁴⁰ as a lover.

JULIA. Nay, you are wrong entirely. We were contracted before my father's death. That, and some consequent embarrassments, have delayed what I know to be my Faulkland's ¹⁴⁵ most ardent wish. He is too generous to trifle on such a point—and for his character, you wrong him there too. No, Lydia, he is too proud, too noble to be jealous; if he is captious, 'tis without dissembling; if fretful, ¹⁵⁰ without rudeness. Unused to the fopperies of love, he is negligent of the little duties expected from a lover—but being unhackneyed in the passion, his affection is ardent and sincere; and as it engrosses his whole soul, he expects ¹⁵⁵ every thought and emotion of his mistress to move in unison with his. Yet, though his pride calls for this full return, his humility makes him undervalue those qualities in him which would entitle him to it; and not feeling ¹⁶⁰ why he should be loved to the degree he wishes, he still suspects that he is not loved enough. This temper, I must own, has cost me many unhappy hours; but I have learned to think myself his debtor, for those imperfections ¹⁶⁵ which arise from the ardour of his attachment.

LYDIA. Well, I cannot blame you for defending him. But tell me candidly, Julia, had he never saved your life, do you think you 170 should have been attached to him as you are?—Believe me, the rude blast that overset your boat was a prosperous gale of love to him.

JULIA. Gratitude may have strengthened 175 my attachment to Mr. Faulkland, but I loved him before he had preserved me; yet surely that alone were an obligation sufficient.

LYDIA. Obligation! why a water spaniel would have done as much!—Well, I should 180 never think of giving my heart to a man because he could swim!

JULIA. Come, Lydia, you are too inconsiderate.

LYDIA. Nay, I do but jest.—What's 185 here?

Enter LUCY in a hurry

LUCY. O ma'am, here is Sir Anthony Absolute just come home with your aunt.

LYDIA. They'll not come here.—Lucy, do you watch. [Exit LUCY 190

JULIA. Yet I must go. Sir Anthony does not know I am here, and if we meet, he'll detain me, to show me the town. I'll take another opportunity of paying my respects to Mrs. Malaprop, when she shall treat me, as long 195

as she chooses, with her select words so ingeniously *misapplied*, without being mispronounced.

Reënter LUCY

LUCY. O Lud! ma'am, they are both coming upstairs.

LYDIA. Well, I'll not detain you, coz.^o—
Adieu, my dear Julia, I'm sure you are in haste to send to Faulkland.—There—through my room you'll find another staircase.

JULIA. Adieu! [*Embraces LYDIA and exit* 205

LYDIA. Here, my dear Lucy, hide these books. Quick, quick!—Fling *Peregrine Pickle* under the toilet—throw *Roderick Random* into the closet—put *The Innocent Adultery* into *The Whole Duty of Man*—thrust *Lord Aim-* 210
worth under the sofa—cram *Ovid* behind the bolster—there—put *The Man of Feeling* into your pocket—so, so—now lay *Mrs. Chapone* in sight, and leave *Fordyce's Sermons* open on the table.

215

LUCY. O burn it, ma'am! the hairdresser has torn away as far as *Proper Pride*.

LYDIA. Never mind—open at *Sobriety*.—Fling me *Lord Chesterfield's Letters*.—Now for 'em.
[*Exit LUCY* 220

Enter MRS. MALAPROP, and SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE

MRS. MALAPROP. There, Sir Anthony, there sits the deliberate simpleton who wants to disgrace her family, and lavish herself on a fellow not worth a shilling.

LYDIA. Madam, I thought you once—— 225

MRS. MALAPROP. You thought, miss! I don't know any business you have to think at all—thought does not become a young woman. But the point we would request of you is, that you will promise to forget this fellow—to illiterate^o him, I say, quite from your memory. 230

LYDIA. Ah, madam! our memories are independent of our wills. It is not so easy to forget.

MRS. MALAPROP. But I say it is, miss; there is nothing on earth so easy as to forget, if 235 a person chooses to set about it. I'm sure I have as much forgot your poor dear uncle as if he had never existed—and I thought it my duty so to do; and let me tell you, Lydia, these violent memories don't become a young 240 woman.

SIR ANTHONY. Why sure she won't pretend to remember what she's ordered not!—aye, this comes of her reading!

LYDIA. What crime, madam, have I committed, to be treated thus? 245

MRS. MALAPROP. Now don't attempt to extirpate^o yourself from the matter; you know I have proof controvertible^o of it.—But tell me, will you promise to do as you're bid? Will 250

you take a husband of your friends' choosing?

LYDIA. Madam, I must tell you plainly, that had I no preference for any one else, the choice you have made would be my aversion. 255

MRS. MALAPROP. What business have you, miss, with *preference* and *aversion*? They don't become a young woman; and you ought to know, that as both always wear off, 'tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little aversion. 260
I am sure I hated your poor dear uncle before marriage as if he'd been a blackamoor—and yet, miss, you are sensible what a wife I made!—and when it pleased Heaven to release me from him, 'tis unknown what tears I 265
shed!—But suppose we were going to give you another choice, will you promise us to give up this Beverley?

LYDIA. Could I belie my thoughts so far as to give that promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words. 270

MRS. MALAPROP. Take yourself to your room.—You are fit company for nothing but your own ill-humours.

LYDIA. Willingly, ma'am—I cannot change 275
for the worse. [Exit

MRS. MALAPROP. There's a little intricate^o
hussy for you!

SIR ANTHONY. It is not to be wondered at, ma'am,—all this is the natural consequence 280

of teaching girls to read. Had I a thousand daughters, by Heaven! I'd as soon have them taught the black art^o as their alphabet!

MRS. MALAPROP. Nay, nay, Sir Anthony, you are an absolute misanthropy.^o 285

SIR ANTHONY. In my way hither, Mrs. Malaprop, I observed your niece's maid coming forth from a circulating library!—She had a book in each hand—they were half-bound volumes, with marble covers!—From that 290 moment I guessed how full of duty I should see her mistress!

MRS. MALAPROP. Those are vile places, indeed!

SIR ANTHONY. Madam, a circulating li- 295 brary in a town is as an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge^o! It blossoms through the year!—And depend on it, Mrs. Malaprop, that they who are so fond of handling the leaves, will long for the fruit at last. 300

MRS. MALAPROP. Fie, fie, Sir Anthony! you surely speak laconically.^o

SIR ANTHONY. Why, Mrs. Malaprop, in moderation now, what would you have a woman know? 305

MRS. MALAPROP. Observe me, Sir Anthony. I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny^o of learning; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman; for instance, I would never let her meddle with 310

Greek, or Hebrew, or algebra, or simony, or fluxions, or paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning—neither would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments. ³¹⁵
—But, Sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding-school, in order to learn a little ingenuity^o and artifice. Then, sir, she should have a supercilious^o knowledge in accounts;—and as she grew up, I would have ³²⁰ her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious^o countries;—but above all, Sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy,^o that she might not mis-spell, and mis-pronounce words so shamefully as girls ³²⁵ usually do; and likewise that she might reprehend^o the true meaning of what she is saying. This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know;—and I don't think there is a superstitious^o article in it. 330

SIR ANTHONY. Well, well, Mrs. Malaprop, I will dispute the point no further with you; though I must confess, that you are a truly moderate and polite arguer, for almost every third word you say is on my side of the ques- ³³⁵ tion. But, Mrs. Malaprop, to the more important point in debate—you say you have no objection to my proposal?

MRS. MALAPROP. None, I assure you. I am under no positive engagement with Mr. ³⁴⁰

Acres, and as Lydia is so obstinate against him, perhaps your son may have better success.

SIR ANTHONY. Well, madam, I will write for the boy directly. He knows not a syllable of this yet, though I have for some time had ³⁴⁵ the proposal in my head. He is at present with his regiment.

MRS. MALAPROP. We have never seen your son, Sir Anthony; but I hope no objection on his side. 350

SIR ANTHONY. Objection!—let him object if he dare!—No, no, Mrs. Malaprop, Jack knows that the least demur puts me in a frenzy directly.—My process was always very simple—in their younger days, 'twas “Jack, do this;” ³⁵⁵—if he demurred, I knocked him down—and if he grumbled at that, I always sent him out of the room.

MRS. MALAPROP. Aye, and the properest way, o' my conscience!—nothing is so con- ³⁶⁰ ciliating to young people as severity.—Well, Sir Anthony, I shall give Mr. Acres his discharge, and prepare Lydia to receive your son's invocations;—and I hope you will represent her to the captain as an object not altogether ³⁶⁵ illegible.°

SIR ANTHONY. Madam, I will handle the subject prudently.—Well, I must leave you; and let me beg you, Mrs. Malaprop, to enforce this matter roundly to the girl.—Take my ³⁷⁰

advice—keep a tight hand; if she rejects this proposal, clap her under lock and key; and if you 'were just to let the servants forget to bring her dinner for three or four days, you can't conceive how she'd come about. [*Exit* 375]

MRS. MALAPROP. Well, at any rate, I shall be glad to get her from under my intuition.^o She has somehow discovered my partiality for Sir Lucius O'Trigger—sure, Lucy can't have betrayed me!—No, the girl is such a simple- 380 ton, I should have made her confess it.—Lucy! —Lucy!—[*Calls.*] Had she been one of your artificial ones, I should never have trusted her.

Enter LUCY

LUCY. Did you call, ma'am?

MRS. MALAPROP. Yes, girl.—Did you see 385 Sir Lucius while you was out?

LUCY. No, indeed, ma'am, not a glimpse of him.

MRS. MALAPROP. You are sure, Lucy, that you never mentioned—— 390

LUCY. Oh gemini! I'd sooner cut my tongue out.

MRS. MALAPROP. Well, don't let your simplicity be imposed on.

LUCY. No, ma'am. 395

MRS. MALAPROP. So, come to me presently, and I'll give you another letter to Sir Lucius;

but mind, Lucy—if ever you betray what you are entrusted with (unless it be other people's secrets to me) you forfeit my malevolence^o 400 forever; and your being a simpleton shall be no excuse for your locality.^o [*Exit*

LUCY. Ha! ha! ha!—So, my dear Simplicity, let me give you a little respite.—[*Altering her manner.*] Let girls in my station be as fond 405 as they please of appearing expert and knowing in their trusts; commend me to a mask of silliness, and a pair of sharp eyes for my own interest under it!—Let me see to what account have I turned my simplicity lately.— 410 [*Looks at a paper.*] For *abetting Miss Lydia Languish in a design of running away with an ensign!*—in money, sundry times, twelve pound twelve; gowns, five; hats, ruffles, caps, &c. &c., numberless!—From the said ensign, 415 within this last month, six guineas and a half.—About a quarter's pay!—Item, from Mrs. Malaprop, for betraying the young people to her—when I found matters were likely to be discovered—two guineas, and a black padua- 420 soy.^o Item, from Mr. Acres, for carrying divers letters—which I never delivered—two guineas, and a pair of buckles.—Item, from Sir Lucius O'Trigger, three crowns, two gold pocket-pieces, and a silver snuff-box!—Well 425 done, Simplicity!—Yet I was forced to make

my Hibernian believe that he was corresponding, not with the aunt, but with the niece: for though not over rich, I found he had too much pride and delicacy to sacrifice the feelings of a gentleman to the necessities of his fortune. 430
[Exit

ACT II

SCENE I

Captain Absolute's Lodgings

CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE and FAG

FAG. Sir, while I was there, Sir Anthony came in: I told him you had sent me to inquire after his health, and to know if he was at leisure to see you.

ABSOLUTE. And what did he say, on hearing I was at Bath? 5

FAG. Sir, in my life I never saw an elderly gentleman more astonished! He started back two or three paces, rapped out a dozen interjectural oaths, and asked what the devil had 10
brought you here!

ABSOLUTE. Well, sir, and what did you say?

FAG. Oh, I lied, sir—I forget the precise lie; but you may depend on't, he got no truth from

me. Yet, with submission, for fear of blunders ¹⁵
in future, I should be glad to fix what *has*
brought us to Bath: in order that we may lie a
little consistently. Sir Anthony's servants were
curious, sir, very curious indeed.

ABSOLUTE. You have said nothing to them? ²⁰

FAG. Oh, not a word, sir,—not a word! Mr.
Thomas, indeed, the coachman (whom I take
to be the discreetest of whips)——

ABSOLUTE. 'Sdeath!—you rascal! you have
not trusted him! 25

FAG. Oh, no, sir—no—no—not a syllable,
upon my veracity!—He was, indeed, a little
inquisitive; but I was sly, sir—devilish sly! My
master (said I), honest Thomas (you know,
sir, one says *honest* to one's inferiors,) is ³⁰
come to Bath to recruit—Yes, sir, I said to
recruit—and whether for men, money, or con-
stitution, you know, sir, is nothing to him, nor
any one else.

ABSOLUTE. Well, recruit will do—let it be ³⁵
so.

FAG. Oh, sir, recruit will do surprisingly—
indeed, to give the thing an air, I told Thomas
that your honour had already enlisted five dis-
banded chairmen,^o seven minority waiters,^o ⁴⁰
and thirteen billiard-markers.

ABSOLUTE. You blockhead, never say more
than is necessary.

FAG. I beg pardon, sir—I beg pardon—but,

with submission, a lie is nothing unless one 45
supports it. Sir, whenever I draw on my invention for a good current lie, I always forge indorsements as well as the bill.

ABSOLUTE. Well, take care you don't hurt your credit by offering too much security.— 50
Is Mr. Faulkland returned?

FAG. He is above, sir, changing his dress.

ABSOLUTE. Can you tell whether he has been informed of Sir Anthony's and Miss Melville's arrival? 55

FAG. I fancy not, sir; he has seen no one since he came in but his gentleman, who was with him at Bristol.—I think, sir, I hear Mr. Faulkland coming down——

ABSOLUTE. Go, tell him I am here. 60

FAG. Yes, sir.—[*Going.*] I beg pardon, sir, but should Sir Anthony call, you will do me the favour to remember that we are recruiting, if you please.

ABSOLUTE. Well, well. 65

FAG. And, in tenderness to my character, if your honour could bring in the chairmen and waiters, I should esteem it as an obligation; for though I never scruple a lie to serve my master, yet it hurts one's conscience to be 70
found out. [Exit

ABSOLUTE. Now for my whimsical friend—
if he does not know that his mistress is here, I'll tease him a little before I tell him—

Enter FAULKLAND

Faulkland, you're welcome to Bath again; 75
you are punctual in your return.

FAULKLAND. Yes; I had nothing to detain me, when I had finished the business I went on. Well, what news since I left you? how stand matters between you and Lydia? 80

ABSOLUTE. Faith, much as they were; I have not seen her since our quarrel; however, I expect to be recalled every hour.

FAULKLAND. Why don't you persuade her to go off with you at once? 85

ABSOLUTE. What, and lose two-thirds of her fortune? You forget that, my friend.—No, no, I could have brought her to that long ago.

FAULKLAND. Nay, then, you trifle too long— if you are sure of her, propose to the aunt in 90
your own character, and write to Sir Anthony for his consent.

ABSOLUTE. Softly, softly; for though I am convinced my little Lydia would elope with me as Ensign Beverley, yet am I by no means 95
certain that she would take me with the impediment of our friends' consent, a regular humdrum wedding, and the reversion^o of a good fortune on my side; no, no; I must prepare her gradually for the discovery, and 100
make myself necessary to her, before I risk it.

—Well, but, Faulkland, you'll dine with us to-day at the hotel?

FAULKLAND. Indeed I cannot; I am not in spirits to be of such a party. 105

ABSOLUTE. By Heavens! I shall forswear your company. You are the most teasing, captious, incorrigible lover!—Do love like a man.

FAULKLAND. I own I am unfit for company.

ABSOLUTE. Am not I a lover; aye, and a 110 romantic one too? Yet do I carry everywhere with me such a confounded farrago of doubts, fears, hopes, wishes, and all the flimsy furniture of a country miss's brain!

FAULKLAND. Ah! Jack, your heart and 115 soul are not, like mine, fixed immutably on one only object. You throw for a large stake, but losing, you could stake and throw again:—but I have set my sum of happiness on this cast, and not to succeed, were to be stripped of 120 all.

ABSOLUTE. But, for Heaven's sake! what grounds for apprehension can your whimsical brain conjure up at present?

FAULKLAND. What grounds for apprehen- 125 sion, did you say? Heavens! are there not a thousand! I fear for her spirits—her health—her life.—My absence may fret her; her anxiety for my return, her fears for me, may oppress her gentle temper. And for her 130

health, does not every hour bring me cause to be alarmed? If it rains, some shower may even then have chilled her delicate frame! If the wind be keen, some rude blast may have affected her! The heat of noon, the dews of ¹³⁵ the evening, may endanger the life of her, for whom only I value mine. Oh, Jack! when delicate and feeling souls are separated, there is not a feature in the sky, not a movement of the elements, not an aspiration of the breeze, ¹⁴⁰ but hints some cause for a lover's apprehension!

ABSOLUTE. Aye, but we may choose whether we will take the hint or not.—So, then, Faulkland, if you were convinced that Julia ¹⁴⁵ were well and in spirits, you would be entirely content?

FAULKLAND. I should be happy beyond measure—I am anxious only for that.

ABSOLUTE. Then to cure your anxiety at ¹⁵⁰ once—Miss Melville is in perfect health; and is at this moment in Bath.

FAULKLAND. Nay, Jack—don't trifle with me.

ABSOLUTE. She is arrived here with my ¹⁵⁵ father within this hour.

FAULKLAND. Can you be serious?

ABSOLUTE. I thought you knew Sir Anthony better than to be surprised at a sudden whim of

this kind.—Seriously, then, it is as I tell you 160
—upon my honour.

FAULKLAND. My dear friend!—Hollo, Du-Peigne! my hat.—My dear Jack—now nothing on earth can give me a moment's uneasiness. 165

Enter FAG

FAG. Sir, Mr. Acres, just arrived, is below.

ABSOLUTE. Stay, Faulkland, this Acres lives within a mile of Sir Anthony, and he shall tell you how your mistress has been ever since you left her.—Fag, show the gentleman up. 170

[Exit FAG]

FAULKLAND. What, is he much acquainted in the family?

ABSOLUTE. Oh, very intimate: I insist on your not going: besides, his character will divert you. 175

FAULKLAND. Well, I should like to ask him a few questions.

ABSOLUTE. He is likewise a rival of mine—that is, of my other self's, for he does not think his friend Captain Absolute ever saw the 180 lady in question; and it is ridiculous enough to hear him complain to me of one Beverley, a concealed skulking rival, who——

FAULKLAND. Hush!—he's here.

Enter ACRES

ACRES. Ha! my dear friend, noble cap- 185
tain, and honest Jack, how do'st thou? just
arrived, faith, as you see.—Sir, your humble
servant.—Warm work on the roads, Jack!
Odds whips and wheels! I've travelled like a
comet, with a tail of dust all the way as long 190
as the Mall.°

ABSOLUTE. Ah! Bob, you are indeed an
eccentric planet, but we know your attraction
hither.—Give me leave to introduce Mr. Faulk-
land to you; Mr. Faulkland, Mr. Acres. 195

ACRES. Sir, I am most heartily glad to see
you: sir; I solicit your connections.—Hey, Jack
—what, this is Mr. Faulkland, who——

ABSOLUTE. Aye, Bob, Miss Melville's Mr.
Faulkland. 200

ACRES. Odso! she and your father can be
but just arrived before me—I suppose you
have seen them. Ah! Mr. Faulkland, you are
indeed a happy man.

FAULKLAND. I have not seen Miss Mel- 205
ville yet, sir;—I hope she enjoyed full health
and spirits in Devonshire?

ACRES. Never knew her better in my life,
sir,—never better. Odds blushes and blooms!
she has been as healthy as the German Spa.° 210

FAULKLAND. Indeed!—I did hear that she
had been a little indisposed.

ACRES. False, false, sir—only said to vex you: quite the reverse, I assure you.

FAULKLAND. There, Jack, you see she has ²¹⁵ the advantage of me; I had almost fretted myself ill.

ABSOLUTE. Now are you angry with your mistress for not having been sick.

FAULKLAND. No, no, you misunderstand ²²⁰ me:—yet surely a little trifling indisposition is not an unnatural consequence of absence from those we love.—Now confess— isn't there something unkind in this violent, robust, unfeeling health? ²²⁵

ABSOLUTE. Oh, it was very unkind of her to be well in your absence, to be sure!

ACRES. Good apartments, Jack.

FAULKLAND. Well, sir, but you was saying that Miss Melville has been so *exceedingly* ²³⁰ well—what, then, she has been merry and gay, I suppose?—Always in spirits—hey?

ACRES. Merry, odds crickets! she has been the belle and spirit of the company wherever she has been—so lively and entertaining! so ²³⁵ full of wit and humour!

FAULKLAND. There, Jack, there.—Oh, by my soul! there is an innate levity in woman, that nothing can overcome.—What! happy, and I away! ²⁴⁰

ABSOLUTE. Have done.—How foolish this is!

just now you were only apprehensive for your mistress' spirits.

FAULKLAND. Why, Jack, have I been the joy and spirit of the company? 245

ABSOLUTE. No, indeed, you have not.

FAULKLAND. Have I been lively and entertaining?

ABSOLUTE. Oh, upon my word, I acquit you.

FAULKLAND. Have I been full of wit and 250
humour?

ABSOLUTE. No, faith, to do you justice, you have been confoundedly stupid indeed.

ACRES. What's the matter with the gentleman? 255

ABSOLUTE. He is only expressing his great satisfaction at hearing that Julia has been so well and happy—that's all—hey, Faulkland?

FAULKLAND. Oh! I am rejoiced to hear it—yes, yes, she has a *happy* disposition! 260

ACRES. That she has indeed.—Then she is so accomplished—so sweet a voice—so expert at her harpischord—such a mistress of flat and sharp, squallante, rumblante, and quiverante! —There was this time month—odds minims 265
and crotchets! how she did chirrup at Mrs. Piano's concert!

FAULKLAND. There again, what say you to this? You see she has been all mirth and song—not a thought of me! 270

ABSOLUTE. Pho! man, is not music the food of love°?

FAULKLAND. Well, well, it may be so.—Pray, Mr. —, what's his name?—Do you remember what songs Miss Melville sung?

275

ACRES. Not I indeed.

ABSOLUTE. Stay, now, they were some pretty melancholy purling-stream airs, I warrant; perhaps you may recollect;—did she sing, *When absent from my soul's delight?*

280

ACRES. No, that wa'n't it.

ABSOLUTE. Or, *Go, gentle gales!*
Sings.

ACRES. Oh, no! nothing like it. Odds! now I recollect one of them—*My heart's my own, my will is free.*

285

Sings.

FAULKLAND. Fool! fool that I am! to fix all my happiness on such a trifler! 'Sdeath! to make herself the pipe and ballad-monger of a circle! to soothe her light heart with catches° and glees!—What can you say to this, sir?

290

ABSOLUTE. Why, that I should be glad to hear my mistress had been so merry, sir.

FAULKLAND. Nay, nay, nay—I'm not sorry that she has been happy—no, no, I am glad of that—I would not have had her sad or sick,
—yet surely a sympathetic heart would have shown itself even in the choice of a song—she

295

might have been temperately healthy, and somehow, plaintively gay;—but she has been dancing too, I doubt not! 300

ACRES. What does the gentleman say about dancing?

ABSOLUTE. He says the lady we speak of dances as well as she sings.

ACRES. Aye, truly, does she—there was at 305 our last race ball——

FAULKLAND. There!—there—I told you so! I told you so! Oh! she thrives in my absence!—Dancing! But her whole feelings have been in opposition with mine!—I have been anx- 310 ious, silent, pensive sedentary—my days have been hours of care, my nights of watchfulness.—She has been all health! spirit! laugh! song! dance!—

ABSOLUTE. For Heaven's sake, Faulkland, 315 don't expose yourself so!—Suppose she has danced, what then?—does not the ceremony of society often oblige——

FAULKLAND. Well, well, I'll contain myself—perhaps as you say—for form sake.— 320 What, Mr. Acres, you were praising Miss Melville's manner of dancing a minuet—hey?

ACRES. Oh, I dare insure her for that—but what I was going to speak of was her country-dancing. Odds swimings! she has such an 325 air with her!

FAULKLAND. Now disappointment on her!—

Defend this, Absolute; why don't you defend this?—Country-dances! jigs and reels! am I to blame now? A minuet I could have for- 330 given—I should not have minded that—I say I should not have regarded a minuet—but country-dances!—Zounds! had she made one in a cotillon—I believe I could have forgiven even that—but to be monkey-led for a night! 335—to run the gauntlet through a string of amorous palming puppies!—to show paces like a managed° filly!—Oh, Jack, there never can be but one man in the world whom a truly modest and delicate woman ought to pair 340 with in a country-dance; and, even then, the rest of the couples should be her great-uncles and aunts!

ABSOLUTE. Aye, to be sure!—grandfathers and grandmothers! 345

FAULKLAND. If there be but one vicious mind in the set, 'twill spread like a contagion—the action of their pulse beats to the lascivious movement of the jig—their quivering, warm-breathed sighs impregnate the very air—the 350 atmosphere becomes electrical to love, and each amorous spark darts through every link of the chain!—I must leave you—I own I am somewhat flurried—and that confounded looby° has perceived it. [Going 355

ABSOLUTE. Nay, but stay, Faulkland, and thank Mr. Acres for his good news.

FAULKLAND. Damn his news! [Exit

ABSOLUTE. Ha! ha! ha! poor Faulkland five minutes since—"nothing on earth could give 360 him a moment's uneasiness!"

ACRES. The gentleman wa'n't angry at my praising his mistress, was he?

ABSOLUTE. A little jealous, I believe, Bob.

ACRES. You don't say so? Ha! ha! jealous 365 of me—that's a good joke.

ABSOLUTE. There's nothing strange in that, Bob; let me tell you, that sprightly grace and insinuating manner of yours will do some mischief among the girls here. 370

ACRES. Ah! you joke—ha! ha! mischief—ha! ha! but you know I am not my own property, my dear Lydia has forestalled me. She could never abide me in the country, because I used to dress so badly—but odds frogs° 375 and tambours°! I shan't take matters so here, now ancient madam has no voice in it—I'll make my old clothes know who's master. I shall straightway cashier the hunting-frock, and render my leather breeches incapable. My 380 hair has been in training some time.

ABSOLUTE. Indeed!

ACRES. Aye—and thoff the side curls are a little restive, my hind-part takes it very kindly.

ABSOLUTE. Oh, you'll polish, I doubt not. 385

ACRES. Absolutely I propose so—then if I can find out this Ensign Beverley, odds triggers



'Tis a confounded lie!—I know you are in a passion in your heart, you hypocritical young dog!

and flints! I'll make him know the difference o't.

ABSOLUTE. Spoke like a man! But pray, ³⁹⁰ Bob, I observe you have got an odd kind of a new method of swearing——

ACRES. Ha! ha! you've taken notice of it—'tis genteel, isn't it?—I didn't invent it myself though; but a commander in our militia—³⁹⁵ a great scholar, I assure you, says that there is no meaning in the common oaths, and that nothing but their antiquity makes them respectable; because, he says, the ancients would never stick to an oath or two, but would say, ⁴⁰⁰ by Jove! or by Bacchus! or by Mars! or by Venus! or by Pallas, according to the sentiment: so that to swear with propriety, says my little major, the oath should be an echo to the sense^o; and this we call the *oath referential*, ⁴⁰⁵ or *sentimental swearing*—ha! ha! ha! 'tis genteel, isn't it?

ABSOLUTE. Very genteel, and very new, indeed!—and I dare say will supplant all other figures of imprecation. 410

ACRES. Aye, aye, the best terms will grow obsolete.—Damns have had their day.

Enter FAG

FAG. Sir, there is a gentleman below desires to see you.—Shall I show him into the parlour?

ABSOLUTE. Aye, you may.

415

ACRES. Well, I must be gone——

ABSOLUTE. Stay; who is it, Fag?

FAG. Your father, sir.

ABSOLUTE. You puppy, why didn't you show him up directly? *[Exit FAG 420]*

ACRES. You have business with Sir Anthony. —I expect a message from Mrs. Malaprop at my lodgings. I have sent also to my dear friend, Sir Lucius O'Trigger. Adieu, Jack! we must meet at night, when you shall give me a ⁴²⁵dozen bumpers to little Lydia.

ABSOLUTE. That I will with all my heart.—

[Exit ACRES]

Now for a parental lecture—I hope he has heard nothing of the business that has brought me here—I wish the gout had held him fast ⁴³⁰in Devonshire, with all my soul!

Enter SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE

Sir, I am delighted to see you here, looking so well! your sudden arrival at Bath made me apprehensive for your health.

SIR ANTHONY. Very apprehensive, I dare ⁴³⁵say, Jack.—What, you are recruiting here, hey?

ABSOLUTE. Yes, sir, I am on duty.

SIR ANTHONY. Well, Jack, I am glad to see you, though I did not expect it, for I was go- ⁴⁴⁰ing to write to you on a little matter of busi-

ness.—Jack, I have been considering that I grow old and infirm, and shall probably not trouble you long.

ABSOLUTE. Pardon me, sir, I never saw⁴⁴⁵ you look more strong and hearty; and I pray frequently that you may continue so.

SIR ANTHONY. I hope your prayers may be heard, with all my heart. Well, then, Jack, I have been considering that I am so strong⁴⁵⁰ and hearty I may continue to plague you a long time. Now, Jack, I am sensible that the income of your commission, and what I have hitherto allowed you, is but a small pittance for a lad of your spirit.

455

ABSOLUTE. Sir, you are very good.

SIR ANTHONY. And it is my wish, while yet I live, to have my boy make some figure in the world. I have resolved, therefore, to fix you at once in a noble independence.

460

ABSOLUTE. Sir, your kindness overpowers me—such generosity makes the gratitude of reason more lively than the sensations even of filial affection.

SIR ANTHONY. I am glad you are so sensi-⁴⁶⁵ ble of my attention—and you shall be master of a large estate in a few weeks.

ABSOLUTE. Let my future life, sir, speak my gratitude: I cannot express the sense I have of your munificence.—Yet, sir, I presume⁴⁷⁰ you would not wish me to quit the army?

SIR ANTHONY. Oh, that shall be as your wife chooses.

ABSOLUTE. My wife, sir!

SIR ANTHONY. Aye, aye, settle that be-⁴⁷⁵
tween you—settle that between you.

ABSOLUTE. A *wife*, sir, did you say?

SIR ANTHONY. Aye, a wife—why, did not I mention her before?

ABSOLUTE. Not a word of her, sir. ⁴⁸⁰

SIR ANTHONY. Odd so!—I mustn't forget *her*, though.—Yes, Jack, the independence I was talking of is by a marriage—the fortune is saddled with a wife—but I suppose that makes no difference. ⁴⁸⁵

ABSOLUTE. Sir! sir!—you amaze me!

SIR ANTHONY. Why, what the devil's the matter with the fool? Just now you were all gratitude and duty.

ABSOLUTE. I was, sir—you talked to me ⁴⁹⁰
of independence and a fortune, but not a word of a wife.

SIR ANTHONY. Why—what difference does that make? Odds life, sir! if you have the estate you must take it with the live stock on ⁴⁹⁵
it, as it stands.

ABSOLUTE. If my happiness is to be the price, I must beg leave to decline the purchase.—Pray, sir, who is the lady?

SIR ANTHONY. What's that to you, sir?— ⁵⁰⁰

Come, give me your promise to love, and to marry her directly.

ABSOLUTE. Sure, sir, this is not very reasonable, to summon my affections for a lady I know nothing of! 505

SIR ANTHONY. I am 'sure, sir, 'tis more unreasonable in you to object to a lady you know nothing of.

ABSOLUTE. Then, sir, I must tell you plainly that my inclinations are fixed on another— 510 my heart is engaged to an angel.

SIR ANTHONY. Then pray let it send an excuse. It is very sorry—but business prevents its waiting on her.

ABSOLUTE. But my vows are pledged to 515 her.

SIR ANTHONY. Let her foreclose, Jack; let her foreclose; they are not worth redeeming; besides, you have the angel's vows in exchange, I suppose; so there can be no loss there. 520

ABSOLUTE. You must excuse me, sir, if I tell you, once for all, that in this point I cannot obey you.

SIR ANTHONY. Hark'ee, Jack;—I have heard you for some time with patience—I have 525 been cool—quite cool; but take care—you know I am compliance itself—when I am not thwarted;—no one more easily led—when I have my own way;—but don't put me in a frenzy. 530

ABSOLUTE. Sir, I must repeat it—in this I cannot obey you.

SIR ANTHONY. Now damn me! if ever I call you *Jack* again while I live!

ABSOLUTE. Nay, sir, but hear me. 535

SIR ANTHONY. Sir, I won't hear a word—not a word! not one word! so give your promise by a nod—and I'll tell you what, Jack—I mean, you dog—if you don't, by——

ABSOLUTE. What, sir, promise to link my- 540
self to some mass of ugliness! to——

SIR ANTHONY. Zounds! sirrah! the lady shall be as ugly as I choose: she shall have a hump on each shoulder; she shall be as crooked as the crescent; her one eye shall roll like the 545
bull's in Cox's Museum^o; she shall have a skin like a mummy, and the beard of a Jew—she shall be all this, sirrah!—yet I'll make you ogle her all day, and sit up all night to write sonnets on her beauty. 550

ABSOLUTE. This is reason and moderation indeed!

SIR ANTHONY. None of your sneering, puppy! no grinning, jackanapes!

ABSOLUTE. Indeed, sir, I never was in a 555
worse humour for mirth in my life.

SIR ANTHONY. 'Tis false, sir! I know you are laughing in your sleeve; I know you'll grin when I am gone, sirrah!

ABSOLUTE. Sir, I hope I know my duty ⁵⁶⁰
better.

SIR ANTHONY. None of your passion, sir!
none of your violence, if you please!—It won't
do with me, I promise you.

ABSOLUTE. Indeed, sir, I never was cooler ⁵⁶⁵
in my life.

SIR ANTHONY. 'Tis a confounded lie!—I
know you are in a passion in your heart; I
know you are, you hypocritical young dog! but
it won't do. 570

ABSOLUTE. Nay, sir, upon my word——

SIR ANTHONY. So you will fly out! can't
you be cool, like me? What the devil good can
passion do?—Passion is of no service, you
impudent, insolent, overbearing reprobate!— ⁵⁷⁵
There, you sneer again! don't provoke me!—
but you rely upon the mildness of my tem-
per—you do, you dog! you play upon the
meekness of my disposition!—Yet take care
—the patience of a saint may be overcome at ⁵⁸⁰
last!—but mark! I give you six hours and a
half to consider of this: if you then agree,
without any condition, to do everything on
earth that I choose, why—confound you! I
may in time forgive you.—If not, zounds! ⁵⁸⁵
don't enter the same hemisphere with me!
don't dare to breathe the same air, or use the
same light with me; but get an atmosphere

and a sun of your own! I'll strip you of your commission; I'll lodge a five-and-threepence ⁵⁹⁰ in the hands of trustees, and you shall live on the interest.—I'll disown you, I'll disinherit you, I'll unget you! and damn me, if ever I call you Jack again! *[Exit*

ABSOLUTE. Mild, gentle, considerate father ⁵⁹⁵—I kiss your hands!—What a tender method of giving his opinion in these matters Sir Anthony has! I dare not trust him with the truth.—I wonder what old wealthy hag it is that he wants to bestow on me!—Yet he married ⁶⁰⁰ himself for love! and was in his youth a bold intriguer, and a gay companion!

Enter FAG

FAG. Assuredly, sir, your father is wrath to a degree; he comes down stairs eight or ten steps at a time—muttering, growling, and ⁶⁰⁵ thumping the banisters all the way: I and the cook's dog stand bowing at the door—rap! he gives me a stroke on the head with his cane; bids me carry that to my master; then kicking the poor turnspit^o into the area, damns ⁶¹⁰ us all, for a puppy triumvirate!—Upon my credit, sir, were I in your place, and found my father such very bad company, I should certainly drop his acquaintance.

ABSOLUTE. Cease your impertinence, sir, ⁶¹⁵

at present.—Did you come in for nothing more?
—Stand out of the way!

[Pushes him aside, and exit

FAG. Soh! Sir Anthony trims my master; he is afraid to reply to his father—then vents his spleen on poor Fag! When one is vexed ⁶²⁰ by one person, to revenge one's self on another, who happens to come in the way, is the vilest injustice! Ah! it shows the worst temper—the basest——

Enter ERRAND BOY

Boy. Mr. Fag; Mr. Fag; your master ⁶²⁵ calls you.

FAG. Well, you little dirty puppy, you need not bawl so!—The meanest disposition! the——

Boy. Quick, quick, Mr. Fag! ⁶³⁰

FAG. Quick! quick! you impudent jackanapes! am I to be commanded by you too? you little impertinent, insolent, kitchen-bred—— *[Exit, kicking and beating him*

SCENE II

The North Parade

Enter LUCY

LUCY. So—I shall have another rival to add to my mistress's list—Captain Absolute. How-

ever, I shall not enter his name till my purse has received notice in form. Poor Acres is dismissed!—Well, I have done him a last friendly ⁵ office, in letting him know that Beverley was here before him.—Sir Lucius is generally more punctual, when he expects to hear from his *dear Dalia*, as he calls her: I wonder he's not here!—I have a little scruple of conscience ¹⁰ from this deceit; though I should not be paid so well, if my hero knew that Delia was near fifty, and her own mistress.

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER

SIR LUCIUS. Ha! my little ambassadress—upon my conscience, I have been looking for ¹⁵ you; I have been on the South Parade this half hour.

LUCY. [*Speaking simply.*] O gemini! and I have been waiting for your worship here on the North.

SIR LUCIUS. Faith!—may be that was the reason we did not meet; and it is very comical too, how you could go out and I not see you—for I was only taking a nap at the Parade Coffee-house, and I chose the window on pur- ²⁰ pose that I might not miss you.

LUCY. My stars! Now I'd wager a sixpence I went by while you were asleep.

SIR LUCIUS. Sure enough it must have been

so—and I never dreamt it was so late, till I³⁰ waked. Well, but my little girl, have you got nothing for me?

LUCY. Yes, but I have—I've got a letter for you in my pocket.

SIR LUCIUS. O faith! I guessed you weren't³⁵ come empty-handed.—Well—let me see what the dear creature says.

LUCY. There, Sir Lucius. [*Gives him a letter.*]

SIR LUCIUS. [*Reads.*] *Sir—there is often a sudden incentive^o impulse in love, that has a⁴⁰ greater induction^o than years of domestic combination: such was the commotion I felt at the first superfluous^o view of Sir Lucius O'Trigger.—Very pretty, upon my word.—Female punctuation^o forbids me to say more; yet let⁴⁵ me add, that it will give me joy infallible^o to find Sir Lucius worthy the last criterion of my affections.*

DELIA.

Upon my conscience! Lucy, your lady is a great mistress of language. Faith, she's⁵⁰ quite the queen of the dictionary!—for the devil a word dare refuse coming at her call—though one would think it was quite out of hearing.

LUCY. Aye, sir, a lady of her experience——⁵⁵

SIR LUCIUS. Experience! what, at seventeen?

LUCY. O true, sir—but then she reads so—my stars! how she will read off hand!

SIR LUCIUS. Faith, she must be very deep 60
read to write this way—though she is rather
an arbitrary writer too—for here are a great
many poor words pressed into the service of
this note, that would get their *habeas corpus*
from any court in Christendom. 65

LUCY. Ah! Sir Lucius, if you were to hear
how she talks of you!

SIR LUCIUS. Oh, tell her I'll make her the
best husband in the world, and Lady O'Trigger
into the bargain!—But we must get the 70
old gentlewoman's consent—and do every-
thing fairly.

LUCY. Nay, Sir Lucius, I thought you wa'n't
rich enough to be so nice!

SIR LUCIUS. Upon my word, young woman, 75
you have hit it:—I am so poor, that I can't
afford to do a dirty action.—If I did not want
money, I'd steal your mistress and her for-
tune with a great deal of pleasure.—However,
my pretty girl, [*Gives her money.*] here's a 80
little something to buy you a ribbon; and
meet me in the evening, and I'll give you an
answer to this. So, hussy, take a kiss before-
hand to put you in mind. [*Kisses her.*]

LUCY. O Lud! Sir Lucius—I never seed 85
such a gemman! My lady won't like you if
you're so impudent.

SIR LUCIUS. Faith she will, Lucy!—That
same—pho! what's the name of it?—modesty

—is a quality in a lover more praised by the ⁹⁰ women than liked; so, if your mistress asks you whether Sir Lucius ever gave you a kiss, tell her *fifty*—my dear.

LUCY. What, would you have me tell her a lie?

SIR LUCIUS. Ah, then, you baggage! I'll ⁹⁵ make it a truth presently.

LUCY. For shame now! here is some one coming.

SIR LUCIUS. Oh, faith, I'll quiet your con- ¹⁰⁰ science!
[*Exit, humming a tune*]

Enter FAG

FAG. So, so, ma'am! I humbly beg pardon.

LUCY. O Lud! now, Mr. Fag—you flurry one so.

FAG. Come, come, Lucy, here's no one by ¹⁰⁵—so a little less simplicity, with a grain or two more sincerity, if you please.—You play false with us, madam.—I saw you give the baronet a letter. My master shall know this—and if he don't call him out, I will. ¹¹⁰

LUCY. Ha! ha! ha! you gentlemen's gentlemen are so hasty.—That letter was from Mrs. Malaprop, simpleton.—She is taken with Sir Lucius's address.

FAG. How! what tastes some people have! ¹¹⁵
—Why, I suppose I have walked by her window

a hundred times.—But what says our young lady? any message to my master?

LUCY. Sad news, Mr. Fag.—A worse rival than Acres! Sir Anthony Absolute has pro-¹²⁰posed his son.

FAG. What, Captain Absolute?

LUCY. Even so—I overheard it all.

FAG. Ha! ha! ha! very good, faith. Good bye, Lucy, I must away with this news.¹²⁵

LUCY. Well, you may laugh—but it is true, I assure you.—[*Going.*] But, Mr. Fag, tell your master not to be cast down by this.

FAG. Oh, he'll be so disconsolate!

LUCY. And charge him not to think of¹³⁰ quarrelling with young Absolute.

FAG. Never fear! never fear!

LUCY. Be sure—bid him keep up his spirits.

FAG. We will—we will. [*Exeunt severally*]

ACT III

SCENE I

The North Parade

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE

ABSOLUTE. 'Tis just as Fag told me, indeed. Whimsical enough, faith! My father wants to force me to marry the very girl I am

plotting to run away with! He must not know of my connection with her yet awhile.—He ⁵ has too summary a method of proceeding in these matters. However, I'll read my recantation instantly. My conversion is something sudden, indeed—but I can assure him it is very sincere. So, so—here he comes. He looks ¹⁰ plaguy gruff.

Steps aside.

Enter SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE

SIR ANTHONY. No—I'll die sooner than forgive him. Die, did I say? I'll live these fifty years to plague him. At our last meeting, his impudence had almost put me out of temper. ¹⁵ An obstinate, passionate, self-willed boy! Who can he take after? This is my return for getting him before all his brothers and sisters!—for putting him, at twelve years old, into a marching regiment, and allowing him fifty ²⁰ pounds a year, besides his pay, ever since! But I have done with him; he's anybody's son for me. I never will see him more, never—never—never—never.

ABSOLUTE. [*Aside, coming forward.*] Now ²⁵ for a penitential face.

SIR ANTHONY. Fellow, get out of my way!

ABSOLUTE. Sir, you see a penitent before you.

SIR ANTHONY. I see an impudent scoundrel ³⁰ before me.

ABSOLUTE. A sincere penitent. I am come, sir, to acknowledge my error, and to submit entirely to your will.

SIR ANTHONY. What's that? 35

ABSOLUTE. I have been revolving, and reflecting, and considering on your past goodness, and kindness, and condescension to me.

SIR ANTHONY. Well, sir?

ABSOLUTE. I have been likewise weighing ⁴⁰ and balancing what you were pleased to mention concerning duty, and obedience, and authority.

SIR ANTHONY. Well, puppy?

ABSOLUTE. Why then, sir, the result of my ⁴⁵ reflections is—a resolution to sacrifice every inclination of my own to your satisfaction.

SIR ANTHONY. Why now you talk sense—absolute sense—I never heard anything more sensible in my life. Confound you! you shall ⁵⁰ be Jack again.

ABSOLUTE. I am happy in the appellation.

SIR ANTHONY. Why, then, Jack, my dear Jack, I will now inform you who the lady really is. Nothing but your passion and violence, you ⁵⁵ silly fellow, prevented my telling you at first. Prepare, Jack, for wonder and rapture—prepare. What think you of Miss Lydia Languish?

ABSOLUTE. Languish! What, the Languishes of Worcestershire? 60

SIR ANTHONY. Worcestershire! no. Did you never meet Mrs. Malaprop and her niece, Miss Languish, who came into our country just before you were last ordered to your regiment?

ABSOLUTE. Malaprop! Languish! I don't 65 remember ever to have heard the names before. Yet, stay—I think I do recollect something.—Languish! Languish! She squints, don't she? A little red-haired girl?

SIR ANTHONY. Squints?—A red-haired 70 girl! Zounds! no.

ABSOLUTE. Then I must have forgot; it can't be the same person.

SIR ANTHONY. Jack! Jack! what think you of blooming, love-breathing seventeen? 75

ABSOLUTE. As to that, sir, I am quite indifferent. If I can please you in the matter, 'tis all I desire.

SIR ANTHONY. Nay, but Jack, such eyes! such eyes! so innocently wild! so bashfully 80 irresolute! not a glance but speaks and kindles some thought of love! Then, Jack, her cheeks! her cheeks, Jack! so deeply blushing at the insinuations of her tell-tale eyes! Then, Jack, her lips! O Jack, lips smiling at their own 85 discretion; and if not smiling, more sweetly pouting; more lovely in sullenness!

ABSOLUTE. That's she, indeed. Well done, old gentleman. [*Aside.*]

SIR ANTHONY. Then, Jack, her neck! O 90
Jack! Jack!

ABSOLUTE. And which is to be mine, sir, the niece, or the aunt?

SIR ANTHONY. Why, you unfeeling, insensible puppy, I despise you! When I was of 95
your age, such a description would have made me fly like a rocket! The aunt indeed! Odds life! when I ran away with your mother, I would not have touched anything old or ugly to gain an empire.

ABSOLUTE. Not to please your father, sir? 100

SIR ANTHONY. To please my father! zounds! not to please—Oh, my father—odd so!—yes—yes; if my father indeed had desired—that's quite another matter. Though he wa'n't the 105
indulgent father that I am, Jack.

ABSOLUTE. I dare say not, sir.

SIR ANTHONY. But, Jack, you are not sorry to find your mistress is so beautiful?

ABSOLUTE..Sir, I repeat it; if I please you 110
in this affair, 'tis all I desire. Not that I think a woman the worse for being handsome; but, sir, if you please to recollect, you before hinted something about a hump or two, one eye, and a few more graces of that kind—now, with- 115
out being very nice, I own I should rather choose a wife of mine to have the usual number

of limbs, and a limited quantity of back: and though one eye may be very agreeable, yet as the prejudice has always run in favour of ¹²⁰ two, I would not wish to affect a singularity in that article.

SIR ANTHONY. What a phlegmatic sot it is! Why, sirrah, you're an anchorite!—a vile, insensible stock. You a soldier!—you're a ¹²⁵ walking block, fit only to dust the company's regimentals on! Odds life! I have a great mind to marry the girl myself!

ABSOLUTE. I am entirely at your disposal, sir: if you should think of addressing Miss ¹³⁰ Languish yourself, I suppose you would have me marry the aunt; or if you should change your mind, and take the old lady—'tis the same to me—I'll marry the niece.

SIR ANTHONY. Upon my word, Jack, ¹³⁵ thou'rt either a very great hypocrite, or—but, come, I know your indifference on such a subject must be all a lie—I'm sure it must—come, now—damn your demure face!—come, confess Jack—you have been lying—ha'n't you? ¹⁴⁰ You have been playing the hypocrite, hey!—I'll never forgive you, if you ha'n't been lying and playing the hypocrite.

ABSOLUTE. I'm sorry, sir, that the respect and duty which I bear to you should be so ¹⁴⁵ mistaken.

SIR ANTHONY. Hang your respect and duty!

But come along with me, I'll write a note to Mrs. Malaprop, and you shall visit the lady directly. Her eyes shall be the Promethean ¹⁵⁰ torch to you—come along, I'll never forgive you, if you don't come back stark mad with rapture and impatience—if you don't, egad, I'll marry the girl myself! [*Exeunt*

SCENE II

*Julia's Dressing-room*FAULKLAND *discovered alone*

FAULKLAND. They told me Julia would return directly; I wonder she is not yet come! How mean does this captious, unsatisfied temper of mine appear to my cooler judgment! Yet I know not that I indulge it in any other ⁵ point: but on this one subject, and to this one object, whom I think I love beyond my life, I am ever ungenerously fretful and madly capricious! I am conscious of it—yet I cannot correct myself! What tender, honest joy ¹⁰ sparkled in her eyes when we met! How delicate was the warmth of her expressions! I was ashamed to appear less happy—though I had come resolved to wear a face of coolness and upbraiding. Sir Anthony's presence pre- ¹⁵

vented my proposed expostulations; yet I must be satisfied that she has not been so *very* happy in my absence. She is coming! Yes!—I know the nimbleness of her tread, when she thinks her impatient Faulkland counts the 20 moments of her stay.

Enter JULIA

JULIA. I had not hoped to see you again so soon.

FAULKLAND. Could I, Julia, be contented with my first welcome—restrained as we 25 were by the presence of a third person?

JULIA. O Faulkland, when your kindness can make me thus happy, let me not think that I discovered something of coldness in your first salutation. 30

FAULKLAND. 'Twas but your fancy, Julia. I was rejoiced to see you—to see you in such health. Sure I had no cause for coldness?

JULIA. Nay, then, I see you have taken something ill. You must not conceal from me 35 what it is.

FAULKLAND. Well, then—shall I own to you that my joy at hearing of your health and arrival here, by your neighbour Acres, was somewhat damped by his dwelling much on the 40 high spirits you had enjoyed in Devonshire—on your mirth—your singing—dancing—and I

know not what! For such is my temper, Julia, that I should regard every mirthful moment in your absence as a treason to constancy. ⁴⁵ The mutual tear that steals down the cheek of parting lovers is a compact, that no smile shall live there till they meet again.

JULIA. Must I never cease to tax my Faulkland with this teasing minute caprice? Can ⁵⁰ the idle reports of a silly boor weigh in your breast against my tried affection?

FAULKLAND. They have no weight with me, Julia: No, no—I am happy if you have been so—yet only say, that you did not sing with ⁵⁵ mirth—say that you thought of Faulkland in the dance.

JULIA. I never can be happy in your absence. If I wear a countenance of content, it is to show that my mind holds no doubt of my ⁶⁰ Faulkland's truth. If I seemed sad, it were to make malice triumph; and say, that I had fixed my heart on one, who left me to lament his roving, and my own credulity. Believe me, Faulkland, I mean not to upbraid you, when ⁶⁵ I say, that I have often dressed sorrow in smiles, lest my friends should guess whose unkindness had caused my tears.

FAULKLAND. You were ever all goodness to me. Oh, I am a brute, when I but admit a ⁷⁰ doubt of your true constancy!

JULIA. If ever, without such cause from you,

as I will not suppose possible, you find my affections veering but a point, may I become a proverbial scoff for levity and base ingrati- 75 tude.

FAULKLAND. Ah! Julia, that last word is grating to me. I would I had no title to your gratitude! Search your heart, Julia; perhaps what you have mistaken for love, is but the 80 warm effusion of a too thankful heart.

JULIA. For what quality must I love you?

FAULKLAND. For no quality! To regard me for any quality of mind or understanding, were only to esteem me. And for person—I have 85 often wished myself deformed, to be convinced that I owed no obligation there for any part of your affection.

JULIA. Where nature has bestowed a show of nice attention in the features of a man, he 90 should laugh at it, as misplaced. I have seen men, who in this vain article, perhaps, might rank above you; but my heart has never asked my eyes if it were so or not.

FAULKLAND. Now this is not well from 95 you, Julia—I despise person in a man—yet if you loved me as I wish, though I were an Æthiop, you'd think none so fair.

JULIA. I see you are determined to be unkind! The contract which my poor father 100 bound us in gives you more than a lover's privilege.

FAULKLAND. Again, Julia, you raise ideas that feed and justify my doubts. I would not have been more free—no—I am proud of my ¹⁰⁵ restraint. Yet—yet—perhaps your high respect alone for this solemn compact has fettered your inclinations, which else had made a worthier choice. How shall I be sure, had you remained unbound in thought and promise, that I ¹¹⁰ should still have been the object of your persevering love?

JULIA. Then try me now. Let us be free as strangers as to what is past:—my heart will not feel more liberty! 115

FAULKLAND. There now! so hasty, Julia! so anxious to be free! If your love for me were fixed and ardent, you would not lose your hold, even though I wished it!

JULIA. Oh! you torture me to the heart! I ¹²⁰ cannot bear it.

FAULKLAND. I do not mean to distress you. If I loved you less I should never give you an uneasy moment. But hear me. All my fretful doubts arise from this. Women are not used ¹²⁵ to weigh and separate the motives of their affections: the cold dictates of prudence, gratitude, or filial duty, may sometimes be mistaken for the pleadings of the heart. I would not boast—yet let me say, that I have neither age, person, ¹³⁰ or character, to found dislike on; my fortune such as few ladies could be charged with in-



William Groh

Hussy! I'll choke the word in your throat!—come
along—come along.



discretion in the match. O Julia! when love receives such countenance from prudence, nice minds will be suspicious of its birth. 135

JULIA. I know not whither your insinuations would tend:—but as they seem pressing to insult me, I will spare you the regret of having done so.—I have given you no cause for this!

[*Exit in tears*]

FAULKLAND. In tears! stay, Julia: stay but 140
for a moment.—The door is fastened!—Julia!
—my soul—but for one moment!—I hear her
sobbing!—'Sdeath! what a brute am I to
use her thus! Yet stay!—Aye—she is coming
now:—how little resolution there is in wom- 145
an!—how a few soft words can turn them!—
No, faith,—she is *not* coming either!—Why,
Julia—my love—say but that you forgive me—
come but to tell me that—now this is being *too*
resentful. Stay! she is coming too—I thought 150
she would—no steadiness in anything! her go-
ing away must have been a mere trick then—
she sha'n't see that I was hurt by it.—I'll affect
indifference—[*Hums a tune; then listens.*] No
—zounds! she's not coming!—nor don't in- 155
tend it, I suppose.—This is not steadiness, but
obstinacy! Yet I deserve it.—What, after so
long an absence to quarrel with her tenderness!
—'twas barbarous and unmanly!—I should be
ashamed to see her now.—I'll wait till her 160
just resentment is abated—and when I distress

her so again, may I lose her forever, and be linked instead to some antique virago, whose gnawing passions, and long-hoarded spleen, shall make me curse my folly half the day and all ¹⁶⁵ the night! [Exit

SCENE III

Mrs. Malaprop's Lodgings

MRS. MALAPROP, *with a letter in her hand*,
and CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE

MRS. MALAPROP. Your being Sir Anthony's son, captain, would itself be a sufficient accommodation^o; but from the ingenuity^o of your appearance, I am convinced you deserve the character here given to you. 5

ABSOLUTE. Permit me to say, madam, that as I never yet have had the pleasure of seeing Miss Languish, my principal inducement in this affair at present is the honour of being allied to Mrs. Malaprop; of whose intellectual accomplishments, elegant manners, and unaffected learning, no tongue is silent. 10

MRS. MALAPROP. Sir, you do me infinite honour! I beg, captain, you'll be seated.—
[*They sit.*] Ah! few gentlemen, now-a-days, ¹⁵ know how to value the ineffectual^o qualities in a woman!—few think how a little knowledge

becomes a gentlewoman!—Men have no sense now but for the worthless flower of beauty!

ABSOLUTE. It is but too true, indeed, ²⁰ ma'am;—yet I fear our ladies should share the blame—they think our admiration of beauty so great, that knowledge in them would be superfluous. Thus, like garden-trees, they seldom show fruit, till time has robbed them of the ²⁵ more specious blossom.—Few, like Mrs. Malaprop and the orange-tree, are rich in both at once.

MRS. MALAPROP. Sir, you overpower me with good-breeding.—He is the very pine-apple^o of ³⁰ politeness!—You are not ignorant, captain, that this giddy girl has somehow contrived to fix her affections on a beggarly, strolling, eaves-dropping ensign, whom none of us have seen, and nobody knows anything of. ³⁵

ABSOLUTE. Oh, I have heard the silly affair before.—I'm not at all prejudiced against her on that account.

MRS. MALAPROP. You are very good and very considerate, captain. I am sure I have ⁴⁰ done everything in my power since I exploded^o the affair; long ago I laid my positive conjunctions^o on her, never to think on the fellow again;—I have since laid Sir Anthony's preposition^o before her; but, I am sorry to say, ⁴⁵ she seems resolved to decline every particle^o that I enjoin her.

ABSOLUTE. It must be very distressing, indeed, ma'am.

MRS. MALAPROP. Oh! it gives me the hy- 50
drostatics° to such a degree!—I thought she had
persisted° from corresponding with him; but
behold, this very day, I have interceded° an-
other letter from the fellow! I believe I have
it in my pocket.

55

ABSOLUTE. Oh, the devil! my last note.
[*Aside.*]

MRS. MALAPROP. Aye, here it is.

ABSOLUTE. Aye, my note indeed! Oh, the
little traitress Lucy. [*Aside.*]

MRS. MALAPROP. There, perhaps you may 60
know the writing.

Gives him the letter.

ABSOLUTE. I think I have seen the hand
before—yes, I certainly must have seen this
hand before:—

MRS. MALAPROP. Nay, but read it, captain. 65

ABSOLUTE. [*Reads.*] *My soul's idol, my
adored Lydia!*—Very tender indeed!

MRS. MALAPROP. Tender! aye, and profane
too, o' my conscience.

ABSOLUTE. [*Reads.*] *I am excessively 70
alarmed at the intelligence you send me, the
more so as my new rival*——

MRS. MALAPROP. That's you, sir.

ABSOLUTE. [*Reads.*] *Has universally the
character of being an accomplished gentle- 75*

man and a man of honour. Well, that's handsome enough.

MRS. MALAPROP. Oh, the fellow has some design in writing so.

ABSOLUTE. That he had, I'll answer for ⁸⁰ him, ma'am.

MRS. MALAPROP. But go on, sir—you'll see presently.

ABSOLUTE. [*Reads.*] *As for the old weather-beaten she-dragon who guards you—Who* ⁸⁵ *can he mean by that?*

MRS. MALAPROP. Me, sir!—me!—he means me there!—what do you think now?—but go on a little further.

ABSOLUTE. Impudentscoundrel!—[*Reads.*] ⁹⁰ *it shall go hard but I will elude her vigilance, as I am told that the same ridiculous vanity, which makes her dress up her coarse features, and deck her dull chat with hard words which she don't understand—*

95

MRS. MALAPROP. There, sir, an attack upon my language! what do you think of that?—an aspersion upon my parts of speech! was ever such a brute! Sure, if I reprehend^o any thing in this world, it is the use of my oracular^o ¹⁰⁰ tongue, and a nice derangement^o of epitaphs^o!

ABSOLUTE. He deserves to be hanged and quartered! let me see—[*Reads.*] *same ridiculous vanity—*

MRS. MALAPROP. You need not read it ¹⁰⁵ again, sir.

ABSOLUTE. I beg pardon, ma'am—[*Reads.*] *does also lay her open to the grossest deceptions from flattery and pretended admiration—an impudent coxcomb!—so that I have a* ¹¹⁰ *scheme to see you shortly with the old harri-dan's consent, and even to make her a go-between in our interview.*—Was ever such assurance!

MRS. MALAPROP. Did you ever hear any- ¹¹⁵ thing like it?—he'll elude my vigilance, will he?—yes, yes! ha! ha! he's very likely to enter these doors;—we'll try who can plot best!

ABSOLUTE. So we will, ma'am—so we will! Ha! ha! ha! a conceited puppy, ha! ha! ha! ¹²⁰—Well, but Mrs. Malaprop, as the girl seems so infatuated by this fellow, suppose you were to wink at her corresponding with him for a little time—let her even plot an elopement with him—then do you connive at her escape ¹²⁵—while I, just in the nick, will have the fellow laid by the heels, and fairly contrive to carry her off in his stead.

MRS. MALAPROP. I am delighted with the scheme; never was anything better perpè- ¹³⁰ trated!

ABSOLUTE. But, pray, could not I see the lady for a few minutes now?—I should like to try her temper a little.

MRS. MALAPROP. Why, I don't know—I¹³⁵ doubt she is not prepared for a visit of this kind. There is a decorum in these matters.

ABSOLUTE. O Lord! she won't mind me—only tell her Beverley——

MRS. MALAPROP. Sir!¹⁴⁰

ABSOLUTE. Gently, good tongue. [*Aside.*]

MRS. MALAPROP. What did you say of Beverley?

ABSOLUTE. Oh, I was going to propose that you should tell her, by way of jest, that it was¹⁴⁵ Beverley who was below; she'd come down fast enough then—ha! ha! ha!

MRS. MALAPROP. 'Twould be a trick she well deserves; besides, you know the fellow tells her he'll get my consent to see her—ha!¹⁵⁰ ha! Let him if he can, I say again. Lydia, come down here!—[*Calling.*] He'll make me a go-between in their interviews!—ha! ha! ha! Come down, I say, Lydia! I don't wonder at your laughing, ha! ha! ha!—his impudence¹⁵⁵ is truly ridiculous.

ABSOLUTE. 'Tis very ridiculous, upon my soul, ma'am, ha! ha! ha!

MRS. MALAPROP. The little hussy won't hear. Well, I'll go and tell her at once who it is—¹⁶⁰ she shall know that Captain Absolute is come to wait on her. And I'll make her behave as becomes a young woman.

ABSOLUTE. As you please, ma'am.

MRS. MALAPROP. For the present, captain, ¹⁶⁵
 your servant. Ah! you've not done laughing
 yet, I see—elude my vigilance; yes, yes; ha!
 ha! ha! [Exit

ABSOLUTE. Ha! ha! ha! one would think now
 that I might throw off all disguise at once, ¹⁷⁰
 and seize my prize with security; but such is
 Lydia's caprice, that to undeceive were prob-
 ably to lose her. I'll see whether she knows me.
*Walks aside, and seems engaged in looking at
 the pictures.*

Enter LYDIA

LYDIA. What a scene am I now to go through!
 surely nothing can be more dreadful than to ¹⁷⁵
 be obliged to listen to the loathsome addresses
 of a stranger to one's heart. I have heard of
 girls persecuted as I am, who have appealed in
 behalf of their favoured lover to the generosity
 of his rival: suppose I were to try it—there ¹⁸⁰
 stands the hated rival—an officer too!—but oh,
 how unlike my Beverley! I wonder he don't
 begin—truly he seems a very negligent wooer!
 —quite at his ease, upon my word!—I'll speak
 first—Mr. Absolute.

185

ABSOLUTE. Ma'am.
Turns round.

LYDIA. O Heavens! Beverley!

ABSOLUTE. Hush!—hush, my life! softly! be
 not surprised!

LYDIA. I am so astonished! and so terrified! and so overjoyed!—for Heaven's sake! how came you here? 190

ABSOLUTE. Briefly, I have deceived your aunt—I was informed that my new rival was to visit here this evening, and contriving to have him 195 kept away, have passed myself on her for Captain Absolute.

LYDIA. Oh, charming! And she really takes you for young Absolute!

ABSOLUTE. Oh, she's convinced of it. 200

LYDIA. Ha! ha! ha! I can't forbear laughing to think how her sagacity is overreached!

ABSOLUTE. But we trifle with our precious moments—such another opportunity may not occur; then let me now conjure my kind, my 205 condescending angel, to fix the time when I may rescue her from undeserving persecution, and with a licensed warmth plead for my reward.

LYDIA. Will you then, Beverley, consent to 210 forfeit that portion of my paltry wealth?—that burden on the wings of love?

ABSOLUTE. Oh, come to me—rich only thus—in loveliness! Bring no portion to me but thy love—'twill be generous in you, Lydia,—for 215 well you know, it is the only dower your poor Beverley can repay.

LYDIA. How persuasive are his words!—how charming will poverty be with him! [*Aside.*]

ABSOLUTE. Ah! my soul, what a life will we ²²⁰ then live! Love shall be our idol and support! we will worship him with a monastic strictness; abjuring all worldly toys, to center every thought and action there. Proud of calamity, we will enjoy the wreck of wealth; while the ²²⁵ surrounding gloom of adversity shall make the flame of our pure love show doubly bright. By Heavens! I would fling all goods of fortune from me with a prodigal hand, to enjoy the scene where I might clasp my Lydia to my ²³⁰ bosom, and say, the world affords no smile to me but here—[*Embracing her.*] If she holds out now, the devil is in it! [*Aside.*]

LYDIA. Now could I fly with him to the antipodes! but my persecution is not yet ²³⁵ come to a crisis. [*Aside.*]

Reënter MRS. MALAPROP, *listening*

MRS. MALAPROP. I am impatient to know how the little hussy deports herself. [*Aside.*]

ABSOLUTE. So pensive, Lydia!—is then your warmth abated?

MRS. MALAPROP. Warmth abated!—so!—²⁴⁰ she has been in a passion, I suppose. [*Aside.*]

LYDIA. No—nor ever can while I have life.

MRS. MALAPROP. An ill-tempered little devil!

She'll be in a passion all her life—will she?
[*Aside.*]

245

LYDIA. Think not the idle threats of my ridiculous aunt can ever have any weight with me.

MRS. MALAPROP. Very dutiful, upon my word! [*Aside.*]

250

LYDIA. Let her choice be Captain Absolute, but Beverley is mine.

MRS. MALAPROP. I am astonished at her assurance!—to his face—this is to his face!
[*Aside.*]

ABSOLUTE. Thus then let me enforce my
suit.

Kneeling.

MRS. MALAPROP. [*Aside.*] Aye, poor young man!—down on his knees entreating for pity!—I can contain no longer.—[*Coming forward.*]
Why, thou vixen!—I have overheard you.

260

ABSOLUTE. Oh, confound her vigilance!
[*Aside.*]

MRS. MALAPROP. Captain Absolute, I know not how to apologize for her shocking rudeness.

ABSOLUTE. [*Aside.*] So all's safe, I find.—
[*Aloud.*] I have hopes, madam, that time will
bring the young lady——

265

MRS. MALAPROP. Oh, there's nothing to be hoped for from her! she's as headstrong as an allegory° on the banks of Nile.

LYDIA. Nay, madam, what do you charge ²⁷⁰ me with now?

MRS. MALAPROP. Why, thou unblushing rebel—didn't you tell this gentleman to his face that you loved another better?—didn't you say you never would be his? 275

LYDIA. No, madam—I did not.

MRS. MALAPROP. Good Heavens! what assurance!—Lydia, Lydia, you ought to know that lying don't become a young woman!—Didn't you boast that Beverley, that stroller ²⁸⁰ Beverley, possessed your heart?—Tell me that, I say.

LYDIA. 'Tis true, ma'am, and none but Beverley——

MRS. MALAPROP. Hold!—hold, Assur- ²⁸⁵ ance!—you shall not be so rude.

ABSOLUTE. Nay, pray, Mrs. Malaprop, don't stop the young lady's speech: she's very welcome to talk thus—it does not hurt me in the least, I assure you. 290

MRS. MALAPROP. You are too good, captain—too amiably patient—but come with me, miss.—Let us see you again soon, captain—remember what we have fixed.

ABSOLUTE. I shall, ma'am. 295

MRS. MALAPROP. Come, take a graceful leave of the gentleman.

LYDIA. May every blessing wait on my Beverley, my loved Bev——

MRS. MALAPROP. Hussy! I'll choke the ³⁰⁰ word in your throat!—come along—come along.
[*Exeunt severally; CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE kissing his hand to LYDIA—MRS. MALAPROP stopping her from speaking*]

SCENE IV

Acres' Lodgings

ACRES, *as just dressed*, and DAVID

ACRES. Indeed, David—do you think I become it so?

DAVID. You are quite another creature, believe me, master, by the mass! an we've any luck we shall see the Devon monkerony^o in ⁵ all the printshops^o in Bath!

ACRES. Dress does make a difference, David.

DAVID. 'Tis all in all, I think.—Difference! why, an you were to go now to Clod Hall, I am certain the old lady wouldn't know you: ¹⁰ master Butler wouldn't believe his own eyes, and Mrs. Pickle would cry, "Lard presarve me!" Our dairy-maid would come giggling to the door, and I warrant Dolly Tester, your honour's favourite, would blush like my waist- ¹⁵ coat.—Oons! I'll hold a gallon, there an't a dog in the house but would bark, and I question whether Phillis would wag a hair of her tail!

ACRES. Aye, David, there's nothing like polishing. 20

DAVID. So I says of your honour's boots; but the boy never heeds me!

ACRES. But, David, has Mr. De-la-Grace been here? I must rub up my balancing, and chasing, and boring.° 25

DAVID. I'll call again, sir.

ACRES. Do—and see if there are any letters for me at the post-office.

DAVID. I will.—By the mass, I can't help looking at your head!—if I hadn't been by at 30
the cooking, I wish I may die if I should have known the dish again myself! [Exit

ACRES. [*Practising a dancing-step.*] Sink, slide—coupee.°—Confound the first inventors of cotillons! say I—they are as bad as algebra 35
to us country gentlemen.—I can walk a minuet easy enough when I am forced!—and I have been accounted a good stick in a country-dance.—Odds jigs and tabors! I never valued your cross-over to couple—figure in—right and 40
left—and I'd foot it with e'er a captain in the county!—but these outlandish heathen allemandes° and cotillons are quite beyond me!—I shall never prosper at 'em, that's sure—mine are true-born English legs—they don't under- 45
stand their curst French lingo!—their *pas* this, and *pas* that, and *pas* t'other!—damn me! my

feet don't like to be called paws! no, 'tis certain
I have most Antigallican^o toes!

Enter SERVANT

SERVANT. Here is Sir Lucius O'Trigger to 50
wait on you, sir.

ACRES. Show him in.

[Exit SERVANT]

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER

SIR LUCIUS. Mr. Acres, I am delighted to
embrace you.

ACRES. My dear Sir Lucius, I kiss your 55
hands.

SIR LUCIUS. Pray, my friend, what has
brought you so suddenly to Bath?

ACRES. Faith! I have followed Cupid's Jack-
a-lantern,^o and find myself in a quagmire at 60
last.—In short, I have been very ill-used, Sir
Lucius.—I don't choose to mention names, but
look on me as on a very ill-used gentleman.

SIR LUCIUS. Pray what is the case?—I ask
no names. 65

ACRES. Mark me, Sir Lucius, I fall as deep
as need be in love with a young lady—her
friends take my part—I follow her to Bath—
send word of my arrival; and receive answer,

that the lady is to be otherwise disposed of.— 70
This, Sir Lucius, I call being ill-used.

SIR LUCIUS. Very ill, upon my conscience.
—Pray, can you divine the cause of it?

ACRES. Why, there's the matter; she has another lover, one Beverley, who, I am told, is 75
now in Bath.—Odds slanders and lies! he must be at the bottom of it.

SIR LUCIUS. A rival in the case, is there?—
and you think he has supplanted you unfairly?

ACRES. Unfairly! to be sure he has. He 80
never could have done it fairly.

SIR LUCIUS. Then sure you know what is to be done!

ACRES. Not I, upon my soul!

SIR LUCIUS. We wear no swords here, but 85
you understand me.

ACRES. What! fight him!

SIR LUCIUS. Aye, to be sure: what can I mean else?

ACRES. But he has given me no provocation. 90

SIR LUCIUS. Now, I think he has given you the greatest provocation in the world. Can a man commit a more heinous offence against another than to fall in love with the same woman? Oh, by my soul! it is the most un- 95
pardonable breach of friendship.

ACRES. Breach of friendship! aye, aye; but I have no acquaintance with this man. I never saw him in my life.

SIR LUCIUS. That's no argument at all—he ¹⁰⁰ has the less right then to take such a liberty.

ACRES. Gad, that's true—I grow full of anger, Sir Lucius!—I fire apace! Odds hilts and blades! I find a man may have a deal of valour in him, and not know it! But couldn't ¹⁰⁵ I contrive to have a little right of my side?

SIR LUCIUS. What the devil signifies right, when your honour is concerned? Do you think Achilles, or my little Alexander the Great, ever inquired where the right lay? No, by my soul, ¹¹⁰ they drew their broadswords, and left the lazy sons of peace to settle the justice of it.

ACRES. Your words are a grenadier's march to my heart! I believe courage must be catching!—I certainly do feel a kind of val- ¹¹⁵ our rising as it were—a kind of courage, as I may say.—Odds flints, pans, and triggers! I'll challenge him directly.

SIR LUCIUS. Ah, my little friend, if I had Blunderbuss Hall here, I could show you a ¹²⁰ range of ancestry, in the O'Trigger line, that would furnish the new room; every one of whom had killed his man!—For though the mansion-house and dirty acres have slipped through my fingers, I thank Heaven our hon- ¹²⁵ our and the family-pictures are as fresh as ever.

ACRES. O, Sir Lucius! I have had ancestors too!—every man of 'em colonel or captain in the militia!—Odds balls and barrels! say no

more—I'm braced for it. The thunder of your words has soured the milk of human kindness^o in my breast:—Zounds! as the man in the play says, *I could do such deeds^o!* 130

SIR LUCIUS. Come, come, there must be no passion at all in the case—these things should always be done civilly. 135

ACRES. I must be in a passion, Sir Lucius—I must be in a rage.—Dear Sir Lucius, let me be in a rage, if you love me. Come, here's pen and paper.—[*Sits down to write.*] I would the ink were red!—Indite, I say indite!—How shall I begin? Odds bullets and blades! I'll write a good bold hand, however. 140

Sir LUCIUS. Pray compose yourself.

ACRES. Come—now, shall I begin with an oath? Do, Sir Lucius, let me begin with a damme. 145

SIR LUCIUS. Pho! pho! do the thing decently, and like a Christian. Begin now—*Sir*——

ACRES. That's too civil by half. 150

SIR LUCIUS. *To prevent the confusion that might arise*——

ACRES. Well——

SIR LUCIUS. *From our both addressing the same lady*—— 155

ACRES. Aye, there's the reason—*same lady*——
Well——

SIR LUCIUS. *I shall expect the honour of your company*——

ACRES. Zounds! I'm not asking him to dinner. 160

SIR LUCIUS. Pray be easy.

ACRES. Well, then, *honour of your company*——

SIR LUCIUS. *To settle our pretensions*—— 165

ACRES. Well.

SIR LUCIUS. Let me see, aye, King's-Mead-Fields° will do—*in King's-Mead-Fields*.

ACRES. So, that's done.—Well, I'll fold it up presently; my own crest—a hand and dagger 170—shall be the seal.

SIR LUCIUS. You see now this little explanation will put a stop at once to all confusion or misunderstanding that might arise between you.

ACRES. Aye, we fight to prevent any misunderstanding. 175

SIR LUCIUS. Now, I'll leave you to fix your own time. Take my advice, and you'll decide it this evening if you can; then let the worst come of it, 'twill be off your mind to-morrow. 180

ACRES. Very true.

SIR LUCIUS. So I shall see nothing more of you, unless it be by letter, till the evening.—I would do myself the honour to carry your message; but, to tell you a secret, I believe I shall 185 have just such another affair on my own hands. There is a gay captain here, who put a jest on me lately, at the expense of my country, and I

only want to fall in with the gentleman, to call him out. 180

ACRES. By my valour, I should like to see you fight first! Odds life! I should like to see you kill him, if it was only to get a little lesson.

SIR LUCIUS. I shall be very proud of instructing you.—Well, for the present—but remember now, when you meet your antagonist, do everything in a mild and agreeable manner.—Let your courage be as keen, but at the same time as polished, as your sword. 195

[Exeunt severally]

ACT IV

SCENE I

Acres' Lodgings

ACRES *and* DAVID

DAVID. Then, by the mass, sir! I would do no such thing—ne'er a Sir Lucius O'Trigger in the kingdom should make me fight, when I wa'n't so minded. Oons! what will the old lady say, when she hears o't? 5

ACRES. Ah! David, if you had heard Sir Lucius!—Odds sparks and flames! he would have roused your valour.

DAVID. Not he, indeed. I hate such blood-

thirsty cormorants. Look'ee, master, if you'd 10 wanted a bout at boxing, quarter-staff, or short-staff,^o I should never be the man to bid you cry off: but for your curst sharps and snaps,^o I never knew any good come of 'em.

ACRES. But my honour, David, my honour! 15 I must be very careful of my honour.

DAVID. Aye, by the mass! and I would be very careful of it; and I think in return my honour couldn't do less than to be very careful of me. 20

ACRES. Odds blades! David, no gentleman will ever risk the loss of his honour!

DAVID. I say then, it would be but civil in honour never to risk the loss of a gentleman.—Look'ee, master, this honour seems to me to be 25 a marvellous false friend^o: aye, truly, a very courtier-like servant.—Put the case, I was a gentleman (which, thank God, no one can say of me;) well—my honour makes me quarrel with another gentleman of my acquaintance. 30 —So—we fight. (Pleasant enough that!) Boh! I kill him—(the more's my luck!) now, pray who gets the profit of it?—Why, my honour. But put the case that he kills me!—by the mass! I go to the worms, and my honour 35 whips over to my enemy.

ACRES. No, David—in that case—Odds crowns and laurels!—your honour follows you to the grave.

DAVID. Now, that's just the place where I ⁴⁰
could make a shift to do without it.

ACRES. Zounds! David, you are a coward!—
It doesn't become my valour to listen to you.—
What, shall I disgrace my ancestors?—Think
of that, David—think what it would be to ⁴⁵
disgrace my ancestors!

DAVID. Under favour, the surest way of not
disgracing them, is to keep as long as you can
out of their company. Look'ee now, master, to go
to them in such haste—with an ounce of lead ⁵⁰
in your brains—I should think might as well be
let alone. Our ancestors are very good kind of
folks; but they are the last people I should
choose to have a visiting acquaintance with.

ACRES. But, David, now, you don't think ⁵⁵
there is such very, very, *very* great danger,
hey?—Odds life! people often fight without
any mischief done!

DAVID. By the mass, I think 'tis ten to one
against you!—Oons! here to meet some lion- ⁶⁰
headed fellow, I warrant, with his damned
double-barrelled swords, and cut-and-thrust
pistols!—Lord bless us! it makes me tremble
to think o't.—Those be such desperate bloody-
minded weapons! Well, I never could abide ⁶⁵
'em—from a child I never could fancy 'em!—I
suppose there an't been so merciless a beast in
the world as your loaded pistol!

ACRES. Zounds! I *won't* be afraid!—Odds fire and fury! you shan't make me afraid.—⁷⁰ Here is the challenge, and I have sent for my dear friend Jack Absolute to carry it for me.

DAVID. Aye, i' the name of mischief, let him be the messenger.—For my part, I wouldn't lend a hand to it for the best horse in your ⁷⁵ stable. By the mass! it don't look like another letter. It is, as I may say, a designing and malicious-looking letter; and I warrant smells of gunpowder like a soldier's pouch!—Oons! I wouldn't swear it mayn't go off. ⁸⁰

ACRES. Out, you poltroon! you ha'n't the valour of a grasshopper.

DAVID. Well, I say no more—'twill be sad news, to be sure, at Clod Hall! but I ha' done. How Phillis will howl when she hears of it!—⁸⁵ Aye, poor bitch, she little thinks what shooting her master's going after! And I warrant old Crop, who has carried your honour, field and road, these ten years, will curse the hour he was born. [*Whimpering.*] ⁹⁰

ACRES. It won't do, David—I am determined to fight—so get along, you coward, while I'm in the mind.

Enter SERVANT

SERVANT. Captain Absolute, sir.

ACRES. Oh! show him up. [*Exit* SERVANT ⁹⁵

DAVID. Well, Heaven send we be all alive this time to-morrow.

ACRES. What's that?—Don't provoke me, David!

DAVID. Good-bye, master. [*Whimpering.*] 100

ACRES. Get along, you cowardly, dastardly, croaking raven! [*Exit DAVID*]

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE

ABSOLUTE. What's the matter, Bob?

ACRES. A vile, sheep-hearted blockhead! If I hadn't the valour of St. George^o and the 105 dragon to boot——

ABSOLUTE. But what did you want with me, Bob?

ACRES. Oh!—There——[*Gives him the challenge.*] 110

ABSOLUTE. [*Aside.*] *To Ensign Beverley.*—So—what's going on now!—[*Aloud.*] Well, what's this?

ACRES. A challenge!

ABSOLUTE. Indeed! Why, you won't fight 115 him; will you, Bob?

ACRES. Egad, but I will, Jack. Sir Lucius has wrought me to it. He has left me full of rage—and I'll fight this evening, that so much good passion mayn't be wasted. 120

ABSOLUTE. But what have I to do with this?

ACRES. Why, as I think you know something of this fellow, I want you to find him

out for me, and give him this mortal defiance.

ABSOLUTE. Well, give it to me, and trust ¹²⁵ me he gets it.

ACRES. Thank you, my dear friend, my dear Jack; but it is giving you a great deal of trouble.

ABSOLUTE. Not in the least—I beg you ¹³⁰ won't mention it.—No trouble in the world, I assure you.

ACRES. You are very kind.—What it is to have a friend!—You couldn't be my second, could you, Jack? ¹³⁵

ABSOLUTE. Why no, Bob—not in *this* affair—it would not be quite so proper.

ACRES. Well, then, I must get my friend Sir Lucius. I shall have your good wishes, however, Jack? ¹⁴⁰

ABSOLUTE. Whenever he meets you, believe me.

Enter SERVANT

SERVANT. Sir Anthony Absolute is below, inquiring for the captain.

ABSOLUTE. I'll come instantly.—[*Exit* ¹⁴⁵ SERVANT] Well, my little hero, success attend you. [*Going.*

ACRES. Stay—stay, Jack.—If Beverley should ask you what kind of a man your friend Acres is, do tell him I am a devil of a fellow—will ¹⁵⁰ you, Jack?

ABSOLUTE. To be sure I shall. I'll say you are a determined dog—hey, Bob?

ACRES. Aye, do, do—and if that frightens him, egad, perhaps he mayn't come. So tell him ¹⁵⁵ I generally kill a man a week; will you, Jack?

ABSOLUTE. I will, I will; I'll say you are called in the country "Fighting Bob."

ACRES. Right—right—'tis all to prevent mischief; for I don't want to take his life if I ¹⁶⁰ clear my honour.

ABSOLUTE. No!—that's very kind of you.

ACRES. Why, you don't wish me to kill him—do you, Jack?

ABSOLUTE. No, upon my soul, I do not. But ¹⁶⁵ a devil of a fellow, hey? *[Going.]*

ACRES. True, true—but stay—stay, Jack,—you may add, that you never saw me in such a rage before—a most devouring rage!

ABSOLUTE. I will, I will. ¹⁷⁰

ACRES. Remember, Jack—a determined dog.

ABSOLUTE. Aye, aye, "Fighting Bob!"

[Exeunt severally]

SCENE II

Mrs. Malaprop's Lodgings

MRS. MALAPROP and LYDIA

MRS. MALAPROP. Why, thou perverse one!—tell me what you can object to him? Isn't he

a handsome man?—tell me that. A genteel man? a pretty figure of a man?

LYDIA. [*Aside.*] She little thinks whom she is praising!—[*Aloud.*] So is Beverley, ma'am.

MRS. MALAPROP. No caparisons,^o miss, if you please. Caparisons don't become a young woman. No! Captain Absolute is indeed a fine gentleman!

LYDIA. Aye, the Captain Absolute you have seen. [*Aside.*]

MRS. MALAPROP. Then he's so well bred;—so full of alacrity, and adulation!—and has so much to say for himself:—in such good language too! His physiognomy^o so grammatical! Then his presence is so noble! I protest, when I saw him, I thought of what Hamlet says in the play:—

“Hesperian curls^o—the front of Job himself!—

An eye, like March, to threaten at command!—

A station, like Harry Mercury, new—”

Something about kissing—on a hill—however, the similitude^o struck me directly.

LYDIA. How enraged she'll be presently, when she discovers her mistake! [*Aside.*]

Enter SERVANT

SERVANT. Sir Anthony and Captain Absolute are below, ma'am.

MRS. MALAPROP. Show them up here.—[*Exit SERVANT*] Now, Lydia, I insist on your be-³⁰ having as becomes a young woman. Show your good breeding, at least, though you have forgot your duty.

LYDIA. Madam, I have told you my resolution!—I shall not only give him no encour-³⁵ agement, but I won't even speak to, or look at him.

Flings herself into a chair, with her face from the door.

Enter SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE and CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE

SIR ANTHONY. Here we are, Mrs. Malaprop; come to mitigate the frowns of unrelenting beauty,—and difficulty enough I had to bring⁴⁰ this fellow.—I don't know what's the matter; but if I had not held him by force, he'd have given me the slip.

MRS. MALAPROP. You have infinite trouble, Sir Anthony, in the affair. I am ashamed for⁴⁵ the cause!—[*Aside to LYDIA.*] Lydia, Lydia, rise, I beseech you!—pay your respects!

SIR ANTHONY. I hope, madam, that Miss Languish has reflected on the worth of this gentleman, and the regard due to her aunt's⁵⁰

choice, and my alliance.—[*Aside to CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.*] Now, Jack, speak to her!

ABSOLUTE. [*Aside.*] What the devil shall I do!—[*Aside to SIR ANTHONY.*] You see, sir, she won't even look at me, whilst you are ⁵⁵ here. I knew she wouldn't! I told you so. Let me entreat you, sir, to leave us together!

Seems to expostulate with his father.

LYDIA. [*Aside.*] I wonder I ha'n't heard my aunt exclaim yet! sure she can't have looked at him!—perhaps their regimentals^o are alike, ⁶⁰ and she is something blind.

SIR ANTHONY. I say, sir, I won't stir a foot yet!

MRS. MALAPROP. I am sorry to say, Sir Anthony, that my affluence^o over my niece is ⁶⁵ very small.—[*Aside to LYDIA.*] Turn round, Lydia: I blush for you!

SIR ANTHONY. May I not flatter myself that Miss Languish will assign what cause of dislike she can have to my son!—[*Aside to CAP- 70 TAIN ABSOLUTE.*] Why don't you begin, Jack?—Speak, you puppy—speak!

MRS. MALAPROP. It is impossible, Sir Anthony, she can have any. She will not say she has.—[*Aside to LYDIA.*] Answer, hussy! why ⁷⁵ don't you answer?

SIR ANTHONY. Then, madam, I trust that a childish and hasty predilection will be no bar to Jack's happiness.—[*Aside to CAPTAIN AB-*

SOLUTE.]—Zounds! sirrah! why don't you ⁸⁰ speak?

LYDIA. [*Aside.*] I think my lover seems as little inclined to conversation as myself.—How strangely blind my aunt must be!

ABSOLUTE. Hem! hem! madam—hem!— ⁸⁵
[*Attempts to speak, then returns to* SIR ANTHONY.] Faith! sir, I am so confounded!—and—so—so—confused!—I told you I should be so, sir—I knew it.—The—the—tremor of my passion entirely takes away my presence of ⁹⁰ mind.

SIR ANTHONY. But it don't take away your voice, fool, does it?—Go up, and speak to her directly!

CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE *makes signs to* MRS. MALAPROP *to leave them together.*

MRS. MALAPROP. Sir Anthony, shall we ⁹⁵ leave them together?—[*Aside to* LYDIA.] Ah! you stubborn little vixen!

SIR ANTHONY. Not yet, ma'am, not yet!—[*Aside to* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.] What the devil are you at? unlock your jaws, sirrah, or—— ¹⁰⁰

ABSOLUTE. [*Aside.*] Now Heaven send she may be too sullen to look round!—I must disguise my voice.—[*Draws near* LYDIA, *and speaks in a low hoarse tone.*] Will not Miss Languish lend an ear to the mild accents of ¹⁰⁵ true love? Will not——

SIR ANTHONY. What the devil ails the fel-

low? Why don't you speak out?—not stand croaking like a frog in a quinsy!

ABSOLUTE. The—the—excess of my awe, ¹¹⁰ and my—my—my modesty, quite choke me!

SIR ANTHONY. Ah, your modesty again!—I'll tell you what, Jack; if you don't speak out directly, and glibly too, I shall be in such a rage!—Mrs. Malaprop, I wish the lady ¹¹⁵ would favour us with something more than a side-front.

MRS. MALAPROP *seems to chide* LYDIA.

ABSOLUTE [*Aside.*] So all will out, I see!— [*Goes up to LYDIA, speaks softly.*] Be not surprised, my Lydia, suppress all surprise at ¹²⁰ present.

LYDIA. [*Aside.*] Heavens! 'tis Beverley's voice! Sure he can't have imposed on Sir Anthony too!— [*Looks round by degrees, then starts up.*] Is this possible!—my Beverley! ¹²⁵—how can this be?—my Beverley?

ABSOLUTE. Ah! 'tis all over. [*Aside.*]

SIR ANTHONY. Beverley!—the devil—Beverley!—What can the girl mean?—This is my son, Jack Absolute. ¹³⁰

MRS. MALAPROP. For shame, hussy! for shame! your head runs so on that fellow, that you have him always in your eyes!—beg Captain Absolute's pardon directly.

LYDIA. I see no Captain Absolute, but my ¹³⁵ loved Beverley!

SIR ANTHONY. Zounds! the girl's mad!—her brain's turned by reading.

MRS. MALAPROP. O' my conscience, I believe so!—What do you mean by Beverley, hussy? 140
—You saw Captain Absolute before to-day; there he is—your husband that shall be.

LYDIA. With all my soul, ma'am—when I refuse my Beverley——

SIR ANTHONY. Oh! she's as mad as Bed- 145
lam!—or has this fellow been playing us a rogue's trick!—Come here, sirrah, who the devil are you?

ABSOLUTE. Faith, sir, I am not quite clear myself; but I'll endeavour to recollect. 150

SIR ANTHONY. Are you my son or not?—answer for your mother, you dog, if you won't for me.

MRS. MALAPROP. Aye, sir, who are you? O mercy! I begin to suspect!— 155

ABSOLUTE. [*Aside.*] Ye powers of impudence, befriend me!—[*Aloud.*] Sir Anthony, most assuredly I am your wife's son; and that I sincerely believe myself to be yours also, I hope my duty has always shown.—Mrs. Mala- 160
prop, I am your most respectful admirer, and shall be proud to add affectionate nephew.—I need not tell my Lydia, that she sees her faithful Beverley, who, knowing the singular generosity of her temper, assumed that name and 165
station, which has proved a test of the most



William Grotz

Oons! here to meet some lion-headed fellow, I warrant, with his double-barreled swords and cut and thrust pistols!

disinterested love, which he now hopes to enjoy in a more elevated character.

LYDIA. So!—there will be no elopement after all! [*Sullenly.*]

170

SIR ANTHONY. Upon my soul, Jack, thou art a very impudent fellow! to do you justice, I think I never saw a piece of more consummate assurance!

ABSOLUTE. Oh, you flatter me, sir—you 175
compliment—'tis my modesty, you know, sir,—
my modesty that has stood in my way.

SIR ANTHONY. Well, I am glad you are not the dull, insensible varlet you pretended to be, however!—I'm glad you have made a fool 180
of your father, you dog—I am. So this was your *penitence*, your *duty* and *obedience*!—I thought it was sudden!—*You never heard their names before*, not you!—*what, the Languishes of Worcestershire*, hey?—*if you could please* 185
me in the affair, it was all you desired!—Ah! you dissembling villain!—What!—[*Pointing to LYDIA.*] *she squints, don't she?—a little red-haired girl*!—hey?—Why, you hypocritical young rascal!—I wonder you a'n't ashamed 190
to hold up your head!

ABSOLUTE. 'Tis with difficulty, sir.—I am confused—very much confused. as you must perceive.

MRS. MALAPROP. O Lud! Sir Anthony!—a 195
new light breaks in upon me!—hey!—how!

what! captain, did you write the letters then? —What—am I to thank you for the elegant compilation° of *an old weather-beaten she-dragon*—hey!—O mercy!—was it you that 200 reflected on my parts of speech?

ABSOLUTE. Dear sir! my modesty will be overpowered at last, if you don't assist me.—I shall certainly not be able to stand it!

SIR ANTHONY. Come, come, Mrs. Mala- 205 prop, we must forget and forgive;—odds life! matters have taken so clever a turn all of a sudden, that I could find in my heart to be so good-humoured! and so gallant! hey! Mrs. Malaprop! 210

MRS. MALAPROP. Well, Sir Anthony, since you desire it, we will not anticipate the past;—so mind, young people—our retrospection will be all to the future.

SIR ANTHONY. Come, we must leave them 215 together; Mrs. Malaprop, they long to fly into each other's arms, I warrant!—Jack, isn't the cheek as I said, hey?—and the eye, you rogue!—and the lip—hey? Come, Mrs. Malaprop, we'll not disturb their tenderness—theirs is 220 the time of life for happiness!—*Youth's the season made for joy*°—[Sings.]—hey!—Odds life! I'm in such spirits,—I don't know what I could not do!—Permit me, ma'am—[Gives his hand to MRS. MALAPROP.] Tol-de-rol— 225

'gad, I should like to have a little fooling myself.—Tol-de-rol! de-rol.

[*Exit, singing and handing* MRS. MALAPROP.—

LYDIA *sits sullenly in her chair*

ABSOLUTE. [*Aside.*] So much thought bodes me no good.—[*Aloud.*] So grave, Lydia!

LYDIA. Sir!

230

ABSOLUTE. [*Aside.*] So!—egad! I thought as much!—that monosyllable has froze me!—[*Aloud.*] What, Lydia, now that we are as happy in our friends' consent, as in our mutual VOWS——

235

LYDIA. Friends' consent, indeed! [*Peevishly.*]

ABSOLUTE. Come, come, we must lay aside some of our romance—a little wealth and comfort may be endured after all. And for your 240 fortune, the lawyers shall make such settlements as——

LYDIA. Lawyers! I hate lawyers!

ABSOLUTE. Nay, then, we will not wait for their lingering forms, but instantly procure 245 the licence, and——

LYDIA. The licence!—I hate licence!

ABSOLUTE. Oh my love! be not so unkind!—thus let me entreat——[*Kneeling.*]

LYDIA. Pshaw!—what signifies kneeling, 250 when you know I must have you?

ABSOLUTE. [*Rising.*] Nay, madam, there

shall be no constraint upon your inclinations, I promise you.—If I have lost your heart, I resign the rest.—[*Aside.*] 'Gad, I must try 255 what a little spirit will do.

LYDIA. [*Rising.*] Then, sir, let me tell you, the interest you had there was acquired by a mean, unmanly imposition, and deserves the punishment of fraud.—What, you have been 260 treating me like a child!—humouring my romance! and laughing, I suppose, at your success!

ABSOLUTE. You wrong me, Lydia, you wrong me—only hear—— 265

LYDIA. So, while I fondly imagined we were deceiving my relations, and flattered myself that I should outwit and incense them all—behold! my hopes are to be crushed at once, by my aunt's consent and approbation—and I 270 am myself the only dupe at last!—[*Walking about in a heat.*] But here, sir, here is the picture—Beverley's picture! [*Taking a miniature from her bosom.*] which I have worn, night and day, in spite of threats and entreaties!— 275 There, sir; [*Flings it to him.*] and be assured I throw the original from my heart as easily!

ABSOLUTE. Nay, nay, ma'am, we will not differ as to that.—Here, [*Taking out a picture.*] here is Miss Lydia Languish.—What a dif- 280 ference!—aye, there is the heavenly assenting smile, that first gave soul and spirit to my

hopes!—those are the lips which sealed a vow, as yet scarce dry in Cupid's calendar! and there the half-resentful blush, that would have²⁸⁵ checked the ardour of my thanks!—Well, all that's past!—all over indeed!—There, madam—in beauty, that copy is not equal to you, but in my mind its merit over the original, in being still the same, is such—that—I cannot²⁹⁰ find in my heart to part with it.

Puts it up again.

LYDIA. [*Softening.*] 'Tis your own doing, sir—I—I—I suppose you are perfectly satisfied.

ABSOLUTE. O, most certainly—sure, now, this is much better than being in love!—ha!²⁹⁵ ha! ha!—there's some spirit in this!—What signifies breaking some scores of solemn promises:—all that's of no consequence, you know.—To be sure people will say, that Miss didn't know her own mind—but never mind that! Or,³⁰⁰ perhaps, they may be ill-natured enough to hint, that the gentleman grew tired of the lady and forsook her—but don't let that fret you.

LYDIA. There is no bearing his insolence.³⁰⁵
Bursts into tears.

Reënter MRS. MALAPROP *and* SIR ANTHONY
ABSOLUTE

MRS. MALAPROP. Come, we must interrupt your billing and cooing awhile.

LYDIA. This is worse than your treachery and deceit, you base ingrate! [*Sobbing.*]

SIR ANTHONY. What the devil's the mat- 310
ter now!—Zounds! Mrs. Malaprop, this is the oddest billing and cooing I ever heard!—but what the deuce is the meaning of it?—I am quite astonished!

ABSOLUTE. Ask the lady, sir. 315

MRS. MALAPROP. Oh, mercy!—I'm quite analyzed,^o for my part!—Why, Lydia, what is the reason for this?

LYDIA. Ask the gentleman, ma'am.

SIR ANTHONY. Zounds! I shall be in a 320
frenzy!—Why, Jack, you are not come out to be any one else, are you?

MRS. MALAPROP. Aye, sir, there's no more trick, is there?—you are not like Cerberus, three gentlemen at once, are you? 325

ABSOLUTE. You'll not let me speak—I say the lady can account for this much better than I can.

LYDIA. Ma'am, you once commanded me never to think of Beverley again—there is 330
the man—I now obey you: for, from this moment, I renounce him for ever. [*Exit*

MRS. MALAPROP. O mercy! and miracles! what a turn here is—why, sure, captain, you haven't behaved disrespectfully to my niece. 335

SIR ANTHONY. Ha! ha! ha!—ha! ha! ha!

now I see it. Ha! ha! ha!—now I see it—you have been too lively, Jack.

ABSOLUTE. Nay, sir, upon my word——

SIR ANTHONY. Come, no lying, Jack—I'm ³⁴⁰ sure 'twas so.

MRS. MALAPROP. O Lud! Sir Anthony!—O fie, captain!

ABSOLUTE. Upon my soul, ma'am——

SIR ANTHONY. Come, no excuses, Jack; ³⁴⁵ why, your father, you rogue, was so before you!—the blood of the Absolutes was always impatient.—Ha! ha! ha! poor little Lydia! why, you've frightened her, you dog, you have.

ABSOLUTE. By all that's good, sir—— ³⁵⁰

SIR ANTHONY. Zounds! say no more, I tell you. Mrs. Malaprop shall make your peace. You must make his peace, Mrs. Malaprop:—you must tell her 'tis Jack's way—tell her 'tis all our ways—it runs in the blood of our fam- ³⁵⁵ ily! Come away, Jack.—Ha! ha! ha!—Mrs. Malaprop—a young villain! [*Pushing him out.*]

MRS. MALAPROP. O! Sir Anthony!—O fie, captain! [*Exeunt severally*]

SCENE III

The North Parade

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER

SIR LUCIUS. I wonder where this Captain

Absolute hides himself! Upon my conscience! these officers are always in one's way in love affairs:—I remember I might have married Lady Dorothy Carmine, if it had not been for 5 a little rogue of a major, who ran away with her before she could get a sight of me! And I wonder too what it is the ladies can see in them to be so fond of them—unless it be a touch of the old serpent in 'em, that makes the 10 little creatures be caught, like vipers, with a bit of red cloth. Hah! isn't this the captain coming?—faith it is!—There is a probability of succeeding about that fellow, that is mighty provoking! Who the devil is he talking to? 15
Steps aside.

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE

ABSOLUTE [*Aside.*] To what fine purpose I have been plotting! a noble reward for all my schemes, upon my soul!—a little gipsy!—I did not think her romance could have made her so absurd either. 'Sdeath, I never was in a 20 worse humour in my life!—I could cut my own throat, or any other person's, with the greatest pleasure in the world!

SIR LUCIUS. Oh, faith! I'm in the luck of it. I never could have found him in a sweeter 25 temper for my purpose—to be sure I'm just come in the nick! Now to enter into conversation with him, and so quarrel genteelly.—[*Goes*

up to CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.] With regard to that matter, captain, I must beg leave to differ in ³⁰ opinion with you.

ABSOLUTE. Upon my word, then, you must be a very subtle disputant:—because, sir, I happened just then to be giving no opinion at all.

35

SIR LUCIUS. That's no reason. For give me leave to tell you, a man may think an untruth as well as speak one.

ABSOLUTE. Very true, sir; but if a man never utters his thoughts, I should think they might ⁴⁰ stand a chance of escaping controversy.

SIR LUCIUS. Then, sir, you differ in opinion with me, which amounts to the same thing.

ABSOLUTE. Hark'ee, Sir Lucius; if I had not before known you to be a gentleman, upon my ⁴⁵ soul, I should not have discovered it at this interview: for what you can drive at, unless you mean to quarrel with me, I cannot conceive!

SIR LUCIUS. I humbly thank you, sir, for ⁵⁰ the quickness of your apprehension.—[*Bowing.*] You have named the very thing I would be at.

ABSOLUTE. Very well, sir; I shall certainly not balk your inclinations.—But I should be ⁵⁵ glad you would please to explain your motives.

SIR LUCIUS. Pray, sir, be easy—the quarrel is a very pretty quarrel as it stands—we should

only spoil it by trying to explain it. However, your memory is very short, or you could not ⁶⁰ have forgot an affront you passed on me within this week. So no more, but name your time and place.

ABSOLUTE. Well, sir, since you are so bent on it, the sooner the better; let it be this evening ⁶⁵ —here, by the Spring Gardens.^o We shall scarcely be interrupted.

SIR LUCIUS. Faith! that same interruption in affairs of this nature shows very great ill-breeding. I don't know what's the reason, but ⁷⁰ in England, if a thing of this kind gets wind, people make such a pother, that a gentleman can never fight in peace and quietness. However, if it's the same to you, captain, I should take it as a particular kindness if you'd let us ⁷⁵ meet in King's-Mead-Fields, as a little business will call me there about six o'clock, and I may despatch both matters at once.

ABSOLUTE. 'Tis the same to me exactly. A little after six, then, we will discuss this mat- ⁸⁰ ter more seriously.

SIR LUCIUS. If you please, sir; there will be very pretty small-sword light, though it won't do for a long shot. So that matter's settled, and my mind's at ease! [Exit ⁸⁵

Enter FAULKLAND

ABSOLUTE. Well met! I was going to look

for you. O Faulkland! all the demons of spite and disappointment have conspired against me! I'm so vexed, that if I had not the prospect of a resource in being knocked o' the head by- ⁹⁰ and-by, I should scarce have spirits to tell you the cause.

FAULKLAND. What can you mean?—Has Lydia changed her mind?—I should have thought her duty and inclination would now ⁹⁵ have pointed to the same object.

ABSOLUTE. Aye, just as the eyes do of a person who squints: when her love-eye was fixed on me, t'other, her eye of duty, was finely obliqued: but when duty bid her point that ¹⁰⁰ the same way, off t'other turned on a swivel, and secured its retreat with a frown!

FAULKLAND. But what's the resource you——

ABSOLUTE. Oh, to wind up the whole, a ¹⁰⁵ good-natured Irishman here has—[*Mimicking* SIR LUCIUS.]—begged leave to have the pleasure of cutting my throat; and I mean to indulge him—that's all.

FAULKLAND. Prithee, be serious! ¹¹⁰

ABSOLUTE. 'Tis fact, upon my soul! Sir Lucius O'Trigger—you know him by sight—for some affront, which I am sure I never intended, has obliged me to meet him this evening at six o'clock: 'tis on that account I ¹¹⁵ wished to see you; you must go with me.

FAULKLAND. Nay, there must be some mistake, sure. Sir Lucius shall explain himself, and I dare say matters may be accommodated. But this evening did you say? I wish it had been ¹²⁰ any other time.

ABSOLUTE. Why? there will be light enough:—there will (as Sir Lucius says) “be very pretty small-sword light, though it will not do for a long shot.” Confound his long shots! ¹²⁵

FAULKLAND. But I am myself a good deal ruffled by a difference I have had with Julia. My vile tormenting temper has made me treat her so cruelly, that I shall not be myself till we are reconciled. ¹³⁰

ABSOLUTE. By Heavens! Faulkland, you don’t deserve her!

Enter SERVANT, gives FAULKLAND a letter, and exit

FAULKLAND. Oh, Jack! this is from Julia. I dread to open it! I fear it may be to take a last leave!—perhaps to bid me return her letters, ¹³⁵ and restore—Oh, how I suffer for my folly!

ABSOLUTE. Here, let me see.—[*Takes the letter and opens it.*] Aye, a final sentence, indeed!—’tis all over with you, faith!

FAULKLAND. Nay, Jack, don’t keep me in ¹⁴⁰ suspense!

ABSOLUTE. Hear then.—[*Reads.*] *As I am*

convinced that my dear Faulkland's own reflections have already upbraided him for his last unkindness to me, I will not add a word 145
on the subject. I wish to speak with you as soon as possible. Yours ever and truly, JULIA.
There's stubbornness and resentment for you! —[*Gives him the letter.*] Why, man, you don't seem one whit the happier at this! 150

FAULKLAND. O yes, I am; but—but——

ABSOLUTE. Confound your buts!—you never hear anything that would make another man bless himself, but you immediately damn it with a but! 155

FAULKLAND. Now, Jack, as you are my friend, own honestly—don't you think there is something forward, something indelicate, in this haste to forgive? Women should never sue for reconciliation: that should always come 160 from us. They should retain their coldness till wooed to kindness; and their pardon, like their love, should “not unsought be won.”

ABSOLUTE. I have not patience to listen to you:—thou'rt incorrigible! so say no more 165 on the subject. I must go to settle a few matters. Let me see you before six—remember—at my lodgings. A poor industrious devil like me, who have toiled, and drudged, and plotted to gain my ends, and am at last disappointed by other 170 people's folly, may in pity be allowed to swear and grumble a little;—but a captious sceptic in

love, a slave to fretfulness and whim, who has no difficulties but of his own creating, is a subject more fit for ridicule than compassion! ¹⁷⁵

[*Exit*

FAULKLAND. I feel his reproaches; yet I would not change this too exquisite nicety for the gross content with which he tramples on the thorns of love! His engaging me in this duel has started an idea in my head, which I ¹⁸⁰ will instantly pursue. I'll use it as the touchstone of Julia's sincerity and disinterestedness. If her love prove pure and sterling ore, my name will rest on it with honour; and once I've stamped it there, I lay aside my doubts for ¹⁸⁵ ever! But if the dross of selfishness, the alloy of pride, predominate, 'twill be best to leave her as a toy for some less cautious fool to sigh for!

[*Exit*

ACT V

SCENE I

Julia's Dressing-Room

JULIA discovered alone

JULIA. How this message has alarmed me! what dreadful accident can he mean? why such charge to be alone?—O Faulkland!—how

many unhappy moments—how many tears have you cost me!

5

Enter FAULKLAND

JULIA. What means this?—why this caution, Faulkland?

FAULKLAND. Alas! Julia, I am come to take a long farewell.

JULIA. Heavens! what do you mean? 10

FAULKLAND. You see before you a wretch, whose life is forfeited. Nay, start not!—the infirmity of my temper has drawn all this misery on me. I left you fretful and passionate—an untoward accident drew me into a quarrel 15—the event is, that I must fly this kingdom instantly. O Julia, had I been so fortunate as to have called you mine entirely, before this mischance had fallen on me, I should not so deeply dread my banishment! 20

JULIA. My soul is oppressed with sorrow at the nature of your misfortune: had these adverse circumstances arisen from a less fatal cause, I should have felt strong comfort in the thought that I could now chase from your 25 bosom every doubt of the warm sincerity of my love. My heart has long known no other guardian—I now entrust my person to your honour—we will fly together. When safe from pursuit, my father's will may be fulfilled—and I 30

receive a legal claim to be the partner of your sorrows, and tenderest comforter. Then on the bosom of your wedded Julia, you may lull your keen regret to slumbering; while virtuous love, with a cherub's hand, shall smooth the ³⁵ brow of upbraiding thought, and pluck the thorn from compunction.

FAULKLAND. O Julia! I am bankrupt in gratitude! but the time is so pressing, it calls on you for so hasty a resolution!—Would you ⁴⁰ not wish some hours to weigh the advantages you forego, and what little compensation poor Faulkland can make you beside his solitary love?

JULIA. I ask not a moment. No, Faulkland, ⁴⁵ I have loved you for yourself: and if I now, more than ever, prize the solemn engagement which so long has pledged us to each other, it is because it leaves no room for hard aspersions on my fame, and puts the seal of duty to ⁵⁰ an act of love. But let us not linger. Perhaps this delay——

FAULKLAND. 'Twill be better I should not venture out again till dark. Yet am I grieved to think what numberless distresses will press ⁵⁵ heavy on your gentle disposition!

JULIA. Perhaps your fortune may be forfeited by this unhappy act. I know not whether 'tis so; but sure that alone can never make us unhappy. The little I have will be sufficient to ⁶⁰

support us; and exile never should be splendid.

FAULKLAND. Aye, but in such an abject state of life, my wounded pride perhaps may increase the natural fretfulness of my temper,⁶⁵ till I become a rude, morose companion, beyond your patience to endure. Perhaps the recollection of a deed my conscience cannot justify may haunt me in such gloomy and unsocial fits, that I shall hate the tenderness⁷⁰ that would relieve me, break from your arms, and quarrel with your fondness!

JULIA. If your thoughts should assume so unhappy a bent, you will the more want some mild and affectionate spirit to watch over and⁷⁵ console you: one who, by bearing your infirmities with gentleness and resignation, may teach you so to bear the evils of your fortune.

FAULKLAND. Julia, I have proved you to the quick! and with this useless device I throw⁸⁰ away all my doubts. How shall I plead to be forgiven this last unworthy effect of my restless, unsatisfied disposition?

JULIA. Has no such disaster happened as you related?

85

FAULKLAND. I am ashamed to own that it was pretended; yet in pity, Julia, do not kill me with resenting a fault which never can be repeated: but sealing, this once, my pardon, let me to-morrow, in the face of Heaven, re-⁹⁰

ceive my future guide and monitress, and expiate my past folly by years of tender adoration.

JULIA. Hold, Faulkland!—that you are free from a crime, which I before feared to name, ⁹⁵ Heaven knows how sincerely I rejoice! These are tears of thankfulness for that! But that your cruel doubts should have urged you to an imposition that has wrung my heart, gives me now a pang more keen than I can express! ¹⁰⁰

FAULKLAND. By Heavens! Julia——

JULIA. Yet hear me.—My father loved you, Faulkland! and you preserved the life that tender parent gave me; in his presence I pledged my hand—joyfully pledged it— ¹⁰⁵ where before I had given my heart. When, soon after, I lost that parent, it seemed to me that Providence had, in Faulkland, shown me whither to transfer without a pause, my grateful duty, as well as my affection: hence I have ¹¹⁰ been content to bear from you what pride and delicacy would have forbid me from another. I will not upbraid you, by repeating how you have trifled with my sincerity——

FAULKLAND. I confess it all! yet hear—— ¹¹⁵

JULIA. After such a year of trial, I might have flattered myself that I should not have been insulted with a new probation of my sincerity, as cruel as unnecessary! I now see it is not in your nature to be content or con- ¹²⁰

fident in love. With this conviction—I never will be yours. While I had hopes that my persevering attention, and unrepublishing kindness, might in time reform your temper, I should have been happy to have gained a ¹²⁵ dearer influence over you; but I will not furnish you with a licensed power to keep alive an incorrigible fault, at the expense of one who never would contend with you.

FAULKLAND. Nay, but, Julia, by my soul ¹³⁰ and honour, if after this——

JULIA. But one word more.—As my faith has once been given to you, I never will barter it with another. I shall pray for your happiness with the truest sincerity; and the dearest ¹³⁵ blessing I can ask of Heaven to send you, will be to charm you from that unhappy temper, which alone has prevented the performance of our solemn engagement. All I request of you is, that you will yourself reflect upon this in- ¹⁴⁰ firmity, and when you number up the many true delights it has deprived you of, let it not be your least regret, that it lost you the love of one who would have followed you in beggary through the world! [Exit ¹⁴⁵

FAULKLAND. She's gone!—for ever!—There was an awful resolution in her manner, that riveted me to my place.—O fool!—dolt!—barbarian! Cursed as I am, with more imperfections than my fellow-wretches, kind Fortune ¹⁵⁰

sent a heaven-gifted cherub to my aid, and, like a ruffian, I have driven her from my side!—I must now haste to my appointment. Well, my mind is tuned for such a scene. I shall wish only to become a principal in it, and reverse ¹⁵⁵ the tale my cursed folly put me upon forging here.—O Love!—tormentor!—fiend!—whose influence, like the moon's, acting on men of dull souls, makes idiots of them, but meeting subtler spirits, betrays their course, and urges ¹⁶⁰ sensibility to madness! *[Exit*

Enter LYDIA and MAID

MAID. My mistress, ma'am, I know, was here just now—perhaps she is only in the next room. *[Exit*

LYDIA. Heigh-ho! Though he has used me ¹⁶⁵ so, this fellow runs strangely in my head. I believe one lecture from my grave cousin will make me recall him. *[Enter* JULIA.] O Julia, I am come to you with such an appetite for consolation.—Lud! child, what's the matter ¹⁷⁰ with you? You have been crying!—I'll be hanged if that Faulkland has not been tormenting you!

JULIA. You mistake the cause of my uneasiness!—Something has flurried me a lit- ¹⁷⁵ tle. Nothing that you can guess at.—*[Aside.]* I would not accuse Faulkland to a sister!

LYDIA. Ah! whatever vexations you may

have, I can assure you mine surpass them. You know who Beverley proves to be? 180

JULIA. I will now own to you, Lydia, that Mr. Faulkland had before informed me of the whole affair. Had young Absolute been the person you took him for, I should not have accepted your confidence on the subject, with- 185 out a serious endeavour to counteract your caprice.

LYDIA. So, then, I see I have been deceived by everyone! But I don't care—I'll never have him. 190

JULIA. Nay, Lydia——

LYDIA. Why, is it not provoking? when I thought we were coming to the prettiest distress imaginable, to find myself made a mere Smithfield bargain of at last! There had I 195 projected one of the most sentimental elopements!—so becoming a disguise!—so amiable a ladder of ropes°!—conscious moon—four horses—Scotch parson°—with such surprise to Mrs. Malaprop—and such paragraphs in the 200 newspapers!—Oh, I shall die with disappointment!

JULIA. I don't wonder at it!

LYDIA. Now—sad reverse!—what have I to expect, but, after a deal of flimsy prepara- 205 tion with a bishop's licence, and my aunt's blessing, to go simpering up to the altar; or perhaps be cried three times in a country

church, and have an unmannerly fat clerk ask the consent of every butcher in the parish to ²¹⁰ join John Absolute and Lydia Languish, spinster! Oh, that I should live to hear myself called spinster!

JULIA. Melancholy, indeed.

LYDIA. How mortifying, to remember the ²¹⁵ dear delicious shifts I used to be put to, to gain half a minute's conversation with this fellow!—How often have I stole forth, in the coldest night in January, and found him in the garden, stuck like a dripping statue! There ²²⁰ would he kneel to me in the snow, and sneeze and cough so pathetically! he shivering with cold, and I with apprehension! and while the freezing blast numbed our joints, how warmly would he press me to pity his flame, and glow ²²⁵ with mutual ardour!—Ah, Julia, that was something like being in love.

JULIA. If I were in spirits, Lydia, I should chide you only by laughing heartily at you; but it suits more the situation of my mind, at ²³⁰ present, earnestly to entreat you not to let a man, who loves you with sincerity, suffer that unhappiness from your caprice, which I know too well caprice can inflict.

LYDIA. O Lud! what has brought my aunt ²³⁵ here?

Enter MRS. MALAPROP, FAG, and DAVID

MRS. MALAPROP. So! so! here's fine work!—here's fine suicide, parricide, and simulation^o going on in the fields! and Sir Anthony not to be found to prevent the antistrophe^o! 240

JULIA. For Heaven's sake, madam, what's the meaning of this?

MRS. MALAPROP. That gentleman can tell you—'twas he enveloped the affair to me.

LYDIA. Do, sir, will you, inform us? 245

[To FAG.]

FAG. Ma'am, I should hold myself very deficient in every requisite that forms the man of breeding, if I delayed a moment to give all the information in my power to a lady so deeply interested in the affair as you are. 250

LYDIA. But quick! quick, sir!

FAG. True, ma'am, as you say, one should be quick in divulging matters of this nature; for should we be tedious, perhaps while we are flourishing on the subject, two or three 255 lives may be lost!

LYDIA. O patience!—Do, ma'am, for Heaven's sake! tell us what is the matter?

MRS. MALAPROP. Why, murder's the matter! slaughter's the matter! killing's the matter! 260 —but he can tell you the perpendiculars.^o

LYDIA. Then, prithee, sir, be brief.

FAG. Why, then, ma'am, as to murder—I cannot take upon me to say—and as to slaugh-

ter, or manslaughter, that will be as the jury ²⁶⁵ finds it.

LYDIA. But who, sir—who are engaged in this?

FAG. Faith, ma'am, one is a young gentleman whom I should be very sorry any thing ²⁷⁰ was to happen to—a very pretty behaved gentleman! We have lived much together, and always on terms.

LYDIA. But who is this? who? who? who?

FAG. My master, ma'am—my master—I ²⁷⁵ speak of my master.

LYDIA. Heavens! What, Captain Absolute!

MRS. MALAPROP. Oh, to be sure, you are frightened now!

JULIA. But who are with him, sir? 280

FAG. As to the rest, ma'am, this gentleman can inform you better than I.

JULIA. Do speak, friend. [*To DAVID.*]

DAVID. Look'ee, my lady—by the mass! there's mischief going on. Folks don't use to ²⁸⁵ meet for amusement with firearms, firelocks, fire-engines, fire-screens, fire-office,^o and the devil knows what other crackers beside!—This, my lady, I say, has an angry favour.^o

JULIA. But who is there beside Captain ²⁹⁰ Absolute, friend?

DAVID. My poor master—under favour for mentioning him first. You know me, my lady—I am David—and my master of course is, or

was, Squire Acres.—Then comes Squire ²⁹⁵ Faulkland.

JULIA. Do, ma'am, let us instantly endeavour to prevent mischief.

MRS. MALAPROP. O fie!—it would be very inelegant in us:—we should only partici- ³⁰⁰ pate^o things.

DAVID. Ah! do, Mrs. Aunt, save a few lives—they are desperately given, believe me.—Above all, there is that bloodthirsty Philistine, Sir Lucius O'Trigger. 305

MRS. MALAPROP. Sir Lucius O'Trigger? O mercy! have they drawn poor little dear Sir Lucius into the scrape?—Why, how you stand, girl! you have no more feeling than one of the Derbyshire Putrifactions^o! 310

LYDIA. What are we to do, madam?

MRS. MALAPROP. Why, fly with the utmost felicity, to be sure, to prevent mischief!—Here, friend, you can show us the place?

FAG. If you please, ma'am, I will conduct ³¹⁵ you.—David, do you look for Sir Anthony.

[Exit DAVID]

MRS. MALAPROP. Come, girls! this gentleman will exhort^o us.—Come, sir, you're our envoy^o—lead the way, and we'll precede.

FAG. Not a step before the ladies for the ³²⁰ world!

MRS. MALAPROP. You're sure you know the spot?

FAG. I think I can find it, ma'am; and one good thing is, we shall hear the report of the ³²⁵ pistols as we draw near, so we can't well miss them;—never fear, ma'am, never fear.

[Exeunt, he talking]

SCENE II

The South Parade,

Enter CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE, *putting his sword under his great-coat*

ABSOLUTE. A sword seen in the streets of Bath^o would raise as great an alarm as a mad dog.—How provoking this is in Faulkland!—never punctual! I shall be obliged to go without him at last.—Oh, here's Sir Anthony! ⁵ how shall I escape him?

Muffles up his face, and takes a circle to go off.

Enter SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE

SIR ANTHONY. How one may be deceived at a little distance! only that I see he don't know me, I could have sworn that was Jack!—Hey! Gad's life! it is.—Why, Jack, what are you ¹⁰ afraid of? hey!—sure I'm right.—Why, Jack, Jack Absolute!

Goes up to him.

ABSOLUTE. Really, sir, you have the advantage of me:—I don't remember ever to have had the honour—my name is Saunderson, at 15 your service.

SIR ANTHONY. Sir, I beg your pardon—I took you—hey!—why, zounds! it is—Stay—*[Looks up to his face.]* So, so—your humble servant, Mr. Saunderson! Why, you scoun- 20 drel, what tricks are you after now?

ABSOLUTE. Oh, a joke, sir, a joke! I came here on purpose to look for you, sir.

SIR ANTHONY. You did! well, I am glad you were so lucky:—but what are you muffled 25 up so for?—what's this for?—hey?

ABSOLUTE. 'Tis cool, sir, isn't it?—rather chilly somehow:—but I shall be late—I have a particular engagement.

SIR ANTHONY. Stay!—Why, I thought you 30 were looking for me?—Pray, Jack, where is't you are going?

ABSOLUTE. Going, sir?

SIR ANTHONY. Aye, where are you going?

ABSOLUTE. Where am I going? 35

SIR ANTHONY. You unmannerly puppy!

ABSOLUTE. I was going, sir, to—to—to—to Lydia—sir, to Lydia—to make matters up if I could;—and I was looking for you, sir, to—to—— 40

SIR ANTHONY. To go with you, I suppose.—Well, come along.

ABSOLUTE. Oh! zounds! no, sir, not for the world!—I wished to meet with you, sir,—to—to—to—You find it cool, I'm sure, sir—⁴⁵ you'd better not stay out.

SIR ANTHONY. Cool!—not at all.—Well, Jack—and what will you say to Lydia?

ABSOLUTE. Oh, sir, beg her pardon, humour her—promise and vow: but I detain you, sir ⁵⁰—consider the cold air on your gout.

SIR ANTHONY. Oh, not at all!—not at all! I'm in no hurry.—Ah! Jack, you youngsters, when once you are wounded here [*Putting his hand to CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE'S breast.*] Hey! ⁵⁵ what the deuce have you got here?

ABSOLUTE. Nothing, sir—nothing.

SIR ANTHONY. What's this?—here's something hard.

ABSOLUTE. Oh, trinkets, sir! trinkets!—a ⁶⁰ bauble for Lydia!

SIR ANTHONY. Nay, let me see your taste.— [*Pulls his coat open, the sword falls.*] Trinkets!—a bauble for Lydia!—zounds! sirrah, you are not going to cut her throat, are you? ⁶⁵

ABSOLUTE. Ha! ha! ha!—I thought it would divert you, sir, though I didn't mean to tell you till afterwards.

SIR ANTHONY. You didn't?—Yes, this is a very diverting trinket, truly! ⁷⁰

ABSOLUTE. Sir, I'll explain to you.—You know, sir, Lydia is romantic, devilish romantic,

and very absurd of course: now, sir, I intend, if she refuses to forgive me, to unsheath this sword, and swear I'll fall upon its point, and 75 expire at her feet!

SIR ANTHONY. Fall upon a fiddlestick's end!—why, I suppose it is the very thing that would please her.—Get along, you fool!

ABSOLUTE. Well, sir, you shall hear of my 80 success—you shall hear.—*O Lydia!—forgive me, or this pointed steel—*says I.

SIR ANTHONY. *O, booby! stab away and welcome—*says she.—Get along!

[*Exit* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE

Enter DAVID, *running*

DAVID. Stop him! stop him! Murder! 85 Thief! Fire!—Stop fire! Stop fire!—O Sir Anthony—call! call! bid'm stop! Murder! Fire!

SIR ANTHONY. Fire! Murder!—Where?

DAVID. Oons! he's out of sight, and I'm out of breath, for my part! O Sir Anthony, why 90 didn't you stop him? why didn't you stop him?

SIR ANTHONY. Zounds! the fellow's mad!—Stop whom? stop Jack?

DAVID. Aye, the captain, sir!—there's murder and slaughter——

95

SIR ANTHONY. Murder!

DAVID. Aye, please you, Sir Anthony, there's all kinds of murder, all sorts of slaughter to

be seen in the fields: there's fighting going on, sir—bloody sword-and-gun fighting! 100

SIR ANTHONY. Who are going to fight, dunce?

DAVID. Every body that I know of, Sir Anthony:—every body is going to fight, my poor master, Sir Lucius O'Trigger, your son, the 105 captain——

SIR ANTHONY. Oh, the dog! I see his tricks. —Do you know the place?

DAVID. King's-Mead-Fields.

SIR ANTHONY. You know the way? 110

DAVID. Not an inch; but I'll call the mayor —aldermen—constables—churchwardens—and beadles—we can't be too many to part them.

SIR ANTHONY. Come along—give me your shoulder! we'll get assistance as we go—the 115 lying villain!—Well, I shall be in such a frenzy!—So—this was the history of his trinkets! I'll bauble him! [Exeunt

SCENE III

King's-Mead-Fields

Enter SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER *and* ACRES, *with pistols*

ACRES. By my valour! then, Sir Lucius, forty yards is a good distance. Odds levels and aims!—I say it is a good distance.

SIR LUCIUS. Is it for muskets or small field-pieces? Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, you ⁵ must leave those things to me.—Stay now—I'll show you.—[*Measures paces along the stage.*] There now, that is a very pretty distance—a pretty gentleman's distance.

ACRES. Zounds! we might as well fight in ¹⁰ a sentry-box! I tell you, Sir Lucius, the farther he is off, the cooler I shall take my aim.

SIR LUCIUS. Faith! then I suppose you would aim at him best of all if he was out of sight!

ACRES. No, Sir Lucius; but I should think ¹⁵ forty or eight-and-thirty yards——

SIR LUCIUS. Pho! pho! nonsense! three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols is as good as a mile.

ACRES. Odds bullets, no!—by my valour! ²⁰ there is no merit in killing him so near: do, my dear Sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot:—a long shot, Sir Lucius, if you love me!

SIR LUCIUS. Well, the gentleman's friend ²⁵ and I must settle that.—But tell me now, Mr. Acres, in case of an accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you?

ACRES. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius, but I don't understand—— ³⁰

SIR LUCIUS. Why, you may think there's no being shot at without a little risk—and if an unlucky bullet should carry a quietus with it—

I say it will be no time then to be bothering you about family matters. 35

ACRES. A quietus!

SIR LUCIUS. For instance, now—if that should be the case—would you choose to be pickled and sent home?—or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey^o? I'm 40 told there is very snug lying in the Abbey.

ACRES. Pickled!—Snug lying in the Abbey!—Odds tremors! Sir Lucius, don't talk so!

SIR LUCIUS. I suppose, Mr. Acres, you never were engaged in an affair of this kind before? 45

ACRES. No, Sir Lucius, never before.

SIR LUCIUS. Ah! that's a pity!—there's nothing like being used to a thing. Pray now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot?

ACRES. Odds files!—I've practised that— 50 there, Sir Lucius—there. [*Puts himself in an attitude.*] A side-front, hey? Odd! I'll make myself small enough: I'll stand edgeways.

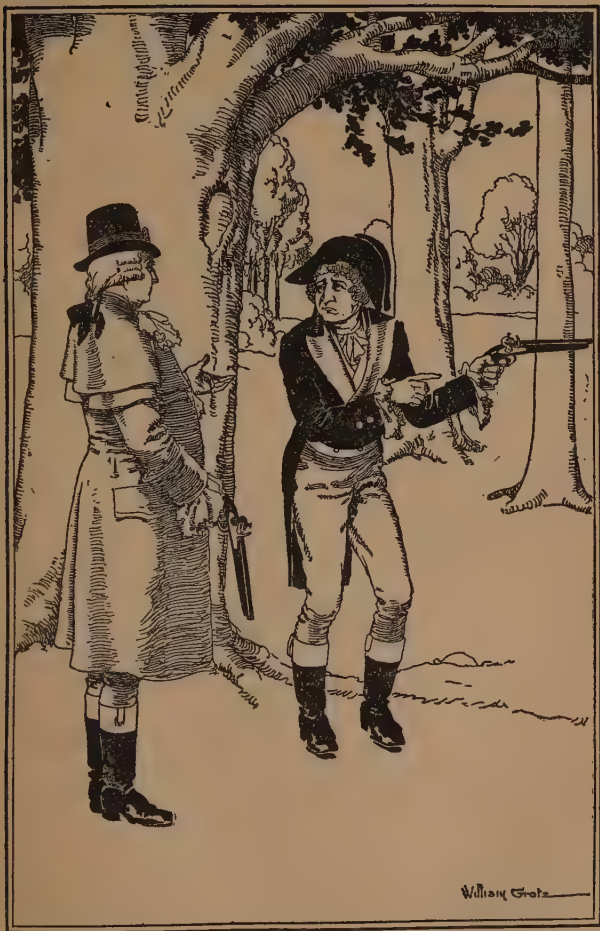
SIR LUCIUS. Now—you're quite out—for if you stand so when I take my aim—— [*Level-* 55 *ling at him.*]

ACRES. Zounds! Sir Lucius—are you sure it is not cocked?

SIR LUCIUS. Never fear.

ACRES. But—but—you don't know—it may go off of its own head! 60

SIR LUCIUS. Pho! be easy.—Well, now if I hit you in the body, my bullet has a double



William Grotz

Do, my dear Sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot: a long shot, Sir Lucius, if you love me!

chance—for if it misses a vital part of your right side—'twill be very hard if it don't succeed on the left!

65

ACRES. A vital part!

SIR LUCIUS. But, there—fix yourself so—
[*Placing him.*—]—let him see the broad-side of your full front—there—now a ball or two may pass clean through your body, and never do
70 any harm at all.

ACRES. Clean through me!—a ball or two clean through me!

SIR LUCIUS. Aye, may they—and it is much the genteest attitude into the bargain.
75

ACRES. Look'ee! Sir Lucius—I'd just as lieve be shot in an awkward posture as a genteel one; so, by my valour! I will stand edgeways.

SIR LUCIUS. [*Looking at his watch.*] Sure they don't mean to disappoint us—Hah!—
80 no, faith—I think I see them coming.

ACRES. Hey!—what!—coming!—

SIR LUCIUS. Aye.—Who are those yonder getting over the stile?

ACRES. There are two of them indeed!—
85 well—let them come—hey, Sir Lucius!—we—
we—we—we—won't run.

SIR LUCIUS. Run!

ACRES. No—I say—we won't run, by my valour!
90

SIR LUCIUS. What the devil's the matter with you?

ACRES. Nothing—nothing—my dear friend—my dear Sir Lucius—but I—I—I don't feel quite so bold, somehow, as I did. 95

SIR LUCIUS. O fie!—consider your honour.

ACRES. Aye—true—my honour. Do, Sir Lucius, edge in a word or two every now and then about my honour.

SIR LUCIUS. Well, here they're coming. 100
[*Looking.*]

ACRES. Sir Lucius—if I wa'n't with you, I should almost think I was afraid.—If my valour should leave me!—Valour will come and go.

SIR LUCIUS. Then pray keep it fast, while 105
you have it.

ACRES. Sir Lucius—I doubt it is going—yes—my valour is certainly going!—it is sneaking off!—I feel it oozing out as it were at the palms of my hands! 110

SIR LUCIUS. Your honour—your honour!—Here they are.

ACRES. O mercy!—now—that I was safe at Clod Hall! or could be shot before I was aware!

Enter FAULKLAND and CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE

SIR LUCIUS. Gentlemen, your most obedi- 115
ent.—Hah!—what, Captain Absolute!—So, I suppose, sir, you are come here, just like myself—to do a kind office, first for your friend—then

to proceed to business on your own account.

ACRES. What, Jack!—my dear Jack!—¹²⁰
my dear friend!

ABSOLUTE. Hark'ee, Bob, Beverley's at hand.

SIR LUCIUS. Well, Mr. Acres—I don't blame
your saluting the gentleman civilly.—[*To*
FAULKLAND.] So, Mr. Beverley, if you'll ¹²⁵
choose your weapons, the captain and I will
measure the ground.

FAULKLAND. My weapons, sir!

ACRES. Odds life! Sir Lucius, I'm not going
to fight Mr. Faulkland; these are my par-¹³⁰
ticular friends.

SIR LUCIUS. What, sir, did you not come
here to fight Mr. Acres?

FAULKLAND. Not I, upon my word, sir.

SIR LUCIUS. Well, now, that's mighty pro-¹³⁵
voking! But I hope, Mr. Faulkland, as there
are three of us come on purpose for the game,
you won't be so cantankerous as to spoil the
party by sitting out.

ABSOLUTE. O pray, Faulkland, fight to¹⁴⁰
oblige Sir Lucius.

FAULKLAND. Nay, if Mr. Acres is so bent on
the matter——

ACRES. No, no, Mr. Faulkland; I'll bear my
disappointment like a Christian.—Look'ee, ¹⁴⁵
Sir Lucius, there's no occasion at all for me to
fight; and if it is the same to you, I'd as lieve
let it alone.

SIR LUCIUS. Observe me, Mr. Acres—I must not be trifled with. You have certainly chal-¹⁵⁰lenged somebody—and you came here to fight him. Now, if that gentleman is willing to represent him, I can't see, for my soul, why it isn't just the same thing.

ACRES. Why no—Sir Lucius—I tell you,¹⁵⁵ 'tis one Beverley I've challenged—a fellow, you see, that dare not show his face!—If he were here, I'd make him give up his pretensions directly.

ABSOLUTE. Hold, Bob—let me set you¹⁶⁰ right—there is no such man as Beverley in the case.—The person who assumed that name is before you; and as his pretensions are the same in both characters, he is ready to support them in whatever way you please.

SIR LUCIUS. Well, this is lucky.—Now you have an opportunity——¹⁶⁵

ACRES. What, quarrel with my dear friend, Jack Absolute?—not if he were fifty Beverleys! Zounds! Sir Lucius, you would not have me¹⁷⁰ so unnatural.

SIR LUCIUS. Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, your valour has oozed away with a vengeance!

ACRES. Not in the least! Odds backs and abettors! I'll be your second with all my¹⁷⁵ heart—and if you should get a quietus, you may command me entirely. I'll get you snug lying in the Abbey here; or pickle you, and send you

over to Blunderbuss Hall, or any thing of the kind, with the greatest pleasure. 180

SIR LUCIUS. Pho! pho! you are little better than a coward.

ACRES. Mind, gentlemen, he calls me a coward; coward was the word, by my valour!

SIR LUCIUS. Well, sir? 185

ACRES. Look'ee, Sir Lucius, 't isn't that I mind the word coward—coward may be said in joke—but if you had called me a poltroon, odds daggers and balls——

SIR LUCIUS. Well, sir? 190

ACRES. I should have thought you a very ill-bred man.

SIR LUCIUS. Pho! you are beneath my notice.

ABSOLUTE. Nay, Sir Lucius, you can't have a better second than my friend Acres.—He is 195 a most determined dog—called in the country, "Fighting Bob."—He generally kills a man a week—don't you, Bob?

ACRES. Aye—at home!

SIR LUCIUS. Well, then, captain, 'tis we 200 must begin—so come out, my little counsellor—*[Draws his sword.]*—and ask the gentleman, whether he will resign the lady, without forcing you to proceed against him?

ABSOLUTE. Come on then, sir—*[Draws.]*; 205 since you won't let it be an amicable suit, here's my reply.

Enter SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE, DAVID, MRS. MALAPROP, LYDIA, *and* JULIA

DAVID. Knock 'em all down, sweet Sir Anthony; knock down my master in particular; and bind his hands over to their good be-²¹⁰haviour!

SIR ANTHONY. Put up, Jack, put up, or I shall be in a frenzy—how came you in a duel, sir?

ABSOLUTE. Faith, sir, that gentleman can²¹⁵ tell you better than I; 'twas he called on me, and you know, sir, I serve his Majesty.

SIR ANTHONY. Here's a pretty fellow; I catch him going to cut a man's throat, and he tells me he serves his Majesty!—Zounds!²²⁰ sirrah, then how durst you draw the king's sword against one of his subjects?

ABSOLUTE. Sir, I tell you! that gentleman called me out, without explaining his reasons.

SIR ANTHONY. Gad! sir, how came you to²²⁵ call my son out, without explaining your reasons?

SIR LUCIUS. Your son, sir, insulted me in a manner which my honour could not brook.

SIR ANTHONY. Zounds! Jack, how durst²³⁰ you insult the gentleman in a manner which his honour could not brook?

MRS. MALAPROP. Come, come, let's have no honour before ladies.—Captain Absolute, come

here.—How could you intimidate us so?—²³⁵
Here's Lydia has been terrified to death for
you.

ABSOLUTE. For fear I should be killed, or
escape, ma'am?

MRS. MALAPROP. Nay, no delusions to the ²⁴⁰
past—Lydia is convinced; speak, child.

SIR LUCIUS. With your leave, ma'am, I must
put in a word here: I believe I could interpret
the young lady's silence. Now mark——

LYDIA. What is it you mean, sir? ²⁴⁵

SIR LUCIUS. Come, come, Delia, we must be
serious now—this is no time for trifling.

LYDIA. 'Tis true, sir; and your reproof bids
me offer this gentleman my hand, and solicit
the return of his affections. ²⁵⁰

ABSOLUTE. O! my little angel, say you so?—
Sir Lucius—I perceive there must be some mis-
take here, with regard to the affront which you
affirm I have given you. I can only say, that it
could not have been intentional. And as you ²⁵⁵
must be convinced, that I should not fear to
support a real injury, you shall now see that I
am not ashamed to atone for an inadvertency—
I ask your pardon.—But for this lady, while
honoured with her approbation, I will sup- ²⁶⁰
port my claim against any man whatever.

SIR ANTHONY. Well said, Jack, and I'll stand
by you, my boy.

ACRES. Mind, I give up all my claim—I make

no pretensions to any thing in the world; ²⁶⁵ and if I can't get a wife without fighting for her, by my valour! I'll live a bachelor.

SIR LUCIUS. Captain, give me your hand: an affront handsomely acknowledged becomes an obligation; and as for the lady, if she chooses ²⁷⁰ to deny her own handwriting, here—— [*Takes out letters.*]

MRS. MALAPROP. O, he will dissolve^o my mystery!— Sir Lucius, perhaps there's some mistake—perhaps I can illuminate^o——

SIR LUCIUS. Pray, old gentlewoman, don't ²⁷⁵ interfere where you have no business.—Miss Languish, are you my Delia, or not?

LYDIA. Indeed, Sir Lucius, I am not.
Walks aside with CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

MRS. MALAPROP. Sir Lucius O'Trigger—ungrateful as you are—I own the soft impeach- ²⁸⁰ ment—pardon my blushes, I am Delia.

SIR LUCIUS. You Delia—pho! pho! be easy.

MRS. MALAPROP. Why, thou barbarous Vandyke^o—those letters are mine.—When you are more sensible of my benignity—perhaps I ²⁸⁵ may be brought to encourage your addresses.

SIR LUCIUS. Mrs. Malaprop, I am extremely sensible of your condescension; and whether you or Lucy have put this trick on me, I am equally beholden to you.—And to show you I ²⁹⁰ am not ungrateful, Captain Absolute, since you

have taken that lady from me, I'll give you my Delia into the bargain.

ABSOLUTE. I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius; but here's my friend, Fighting Bob, ²⁹⁵ unprovided for.

SIR LUCIUS. Hah! little Valour—here, will you make your fortune?

ACRES. Odds wrinkles! No.—But give me your hand, Sir Lucius, forget and forgive; ³⁰⁰ but if ever I give you a chance of pickling me again, say Bob Acres is a dunce, that's all.

SIR ANTHONY. Come, Mrs. Malaprop, don't be cast down—you are in your bloom yet.

MRS. MALAPROP. O Sir Anthony—men are ³⁰⁵ all barbarians.

All retire but JULIA and FAULKLAND.

JULIA. [*Aside.*] He seems dejected and unhappy—not sullen; there was some foundation, however, for the tale he told me—O woman! how true should be your judgment, when ³¹⁰ your resolution is so weak!

FAULKLAND. Julia!—how can I sue for what I so little deserve? I dare not presume—yet Hope is the child of Penitence.

JULIA. O! Faulkland, you have not been ³¹⁵ more faulty in your unkind treatment of me, than I am now in wanting inclination to resent it. As my heart honestly bids me place my weakness to the account of love, I should be

ungenerous not to admit the same plea for ³²⁰ yours.

FAULKLAND. Now I shall be blest indeed!

SIR ANTHONY. [*Coming forward.*] What's going on here?—So you have been quarrelling too, I warrant! Come, Julia, I never inter-³²⁵fered before; but let me have a hand in the matter at last.—All the faults I have ever seen in my friend Faulkland seemed to proceed from what he calls the delicacy and warmth of his affection for you.—There, marry him direct-³³⁰ly, Julia; you'll find he'll mend surprisingly!

The rest come forward.

SIR LUCIUS. Come, now, I hope there is no dissatisfied person, but what is content; for as I have been disappointed myself, it will be very hard if I have not the satisfaction of seeing ³³⁵ other people succeed better.

ACRES. You are right, Sir Lucius.—So Jack, I wish you joy.—Mr. Faulkland the same.—Ladies,—come now, to show you I'm neither vexed nor angry, odds tabors and pipes! I'll ³⁴⁰ order the fiddles in half an hour to the New Rooms^o—and I insist on your all meeting me there.

SIR ANTHONY. Gad! sir, I like your spirit; and at night we single lads will drink a health ³⁴⁵ to the young couples, and a husband to Mrs. Malaprop.

FAULKLAND. Our partners are stolen from us, Jack—I hope to be congratulated by each other—yours for having checked in time the ³⁵⁰ errors of an ill-directed imagination, which might have betrayed an innocent heart; and mine, for having, by her gentleness and candour, reformed the unhappy temper of one, who by it made wretched whom he loved most, ³⁵⁵ and tortured the heart he ought to have adored.

ABSOLUTE. Well, Faulkland, we have both tasted the bitters, as well as the sweets of love; with this difference only, that you always prepared the bitter cup for yourself, while I—— ³⁶⁰

LYDIA. Was always obliged to me for it, hey! Mr. Modesty?—But, come, no more of that—our happiness is now as unalloyed as general.

JULIA. Then let us study to preserve it so: ³⁶⁵ and while Hope pictures to us a flattering scene of future bliss, let us deny its pencil those colours which are too bright to be lasting.—When hearts deserving happiness would unite their fortunes, Virtue would crown them ³⁷⁰ with an unfading garland of modest, hurtless flowers; but ill-judging Passion will force the gaudier rose into the wreath, whose thorn offends them, when its leaves are dropped!

[*Exeunt Omnes*]

EPILOGUE

BY THE AUTHOR

SPOKEN BY MRS. BULKLEY

Ladies, for you—I heard our poet say—
He'd try to coax some moral from his play:
“One moral's plain,” cried I, “without more
fuss;
Man's social happiness all rests on us:
Through all the drama—whether damned or
not—
Love gilds the scene, and women guide the plot.
From every rank obedience is our due—
D'ye doubt?—The world's great stage shall
prove it true.”

The crit,° well skilled to shun domestic strife,
Will sup abroad; but first he'll ask his wife: 10
John Trot, his friend, for once will do the same,
But then—he'll just step home to tell his dame.

The surly SQUIRE at noon resolves to rule,
And half the day—Zounds! madam is a fool!
Convinced at night, the vanquished victor
says, 15
“Ah, Kate! you women have such coaxing
ways!”

The jolly TOPER chides each tardy blade,
Till reeling Bacchus calls on Love for aid:
Then with each toast he sees fair bumpers
 swim,
And kisses Chloe on the sparkling brim! 20

Nay, I have heard that STATESMEN—great
 and wise—
Will sometimes counsel with a lady's eyes!
The servile suitors watch her various face,
She smiles preferment, or she frowns disgrace,
Curtsies a pension here—there nods a place. 25

Nor with less awe, in scenes of humbler life,
Is viewed the mistress, or is heard the wife.
The poorest peasant of the poorest soil,
The child of poverty, and heir to toil,
Early from radiant Love's impartial light 30
Steals one small spark to cheer this world of
 night:
Dear spark! that oft through winter's chilling
 woes
Is all the warmth his little cottage knows!

The wandering TAR, who not for years has
 pressed
The widowed partner of his day of rest, 35
On the cold deck, far from her arms removed,
Still hums the ditty which his Susan loved;
And while around the cadence rude is blown,
The boatswain whistles in a softer tone.

The SOLDIER, fairly proud of wounds and
toil, 40
Pants for the triumph of his Nancy's smile;
But ere the battle should he list her cries,
The lover trembles—and the hero dies!
That heart, by war and honour steeled to fear,
Droops on a sigh, and sickens at a tear! 45

But ye more cautious, ye nice-judging few,
Who give to beauty only beauty's due,
Though friends to love—ye view with deep
regret
Our conquests marred, our triumphs incom-
plete,
Till polished wit more lasting charms dis-
close, 50
And judgment fix the darts which beauty
throws!
In female breasts did sense and merit rule,
The lover's mind would ask no other school;
Shamed into sense, the scholars of our eyes,
Our beaux from gallantry would soon be
wise; 55
Would gladly light, their homage to improve,
The lamp of knowledge at the torch of love!

NOTES

THE RIVALS

Withdrawing of the piece. See Introduction.

Mr. Harris, proprietor and manager of the Covent Garden Theatre.

Covent Garden Theatre, built in 1731 by John Rich, was the scene of many first night plays. Garrick, Kemble, and other famous actors played there.

PROLOGUE, page 3.

LINE 11. sons of Phœbus. Phœbus, another name of Apollo, god of poetry hence poets.

12. the Fleet. A prison nearly eight hundred years old when it was destroyed in 1846. As early as 1290 it became a debtors' prison, for which purpose it was entirely reserved after 1641. See the pun made upon the name in Goldsmith's *The Good-Natured Man*, III, 1.

14. sprig of bays: bay, berry, especially of the laurel, hence a garland or crown bestowed as a prize for excellence, usually literary excellence.

PROLOGUE, page 6.

23. The sentimental muse. An attack on the sentimental comedy which had been so much in vogue. See Introduction.

31. Bid Harry Woodward, etc. See *Dramatis Personæ*.

ACT I

SCENE I

3. Odd's life. A large variety of corrupted oaths are found in this play. "Odd's life," a corruption of *God's life*; "Zounds" or "Oons," *God's wounds*. Of the same nature are

"'Sdeath," "'Sblood," "Zooks," "odds jigs and tabors," "odds flints, pans, and trigger," "odds triggers and flints," "odds whips and wheels," "odds crickets," "odds swimmings," "odds frogs and tambours," "odds rabbit it," most of which are perfectly meaningless.

63. **Zounds**, see above.

67. **thread-papers**: strips of paper for rolling up skeins of thread.

70. **set of thousands**: "A team of six horses worth thousands of pounds."

83. **mort o' merry-making**. *Mort* means much, or a great quantity.

86. **pumproom**: the room connected with the mineral springs, where the waters are drunk.

101. **wig**. After the reign of Louis XIII., in France the wig became a distinctive feature of costume. "For more than a century no gentleman of fashion could appear without one. Such was the extravagance in this article of dress that as much as three guineas an ounce was paid in England for fine qualities of hair, and wigs were made at the cost of £140. It was only toward the end of the eighteenth century that the unnaturalness of this ornament seems to have been thought of and it began to be superseded by the queue with hair powder."

102. **ton**: style.

116. **thoff**: though. **Jack Gauge**. Gauger, officer who measures contents of casks.

117. **ta'en to his carrots**: has taken to his natural hair, which happened to be the color of carrots.

119. **bob**: a kind of wig. See *Century Dictionary*.

123. **Zooks**: contraction of *Godzooks*. "Apparently a corruption of *God's* (that is, Christ's) *hooks*, with reference to the nails with which Christ was fixed on the Cross."—*Century Dictionary*.

132. **Gyde's Porch**: "The lower rooms on the walks kept by Mr. Gyde, had, from their situation, some advantages, particularly a good garden and a retired walk on the margin of the river." (*The New Prose Bath Guide*, 1778; note by Aitken, Temple edition of *The Rivals*.)

SCENE II

3. **circulating library.** For a complete account of the books mentioned in this play, see Nettleton's Introduction to his edition of *The Major Dramas of Sheridan*, lxviii-lxxvii.

38. **blonds:** "Silk lace of two threads, twisted and formed in hexagonal meshes."—*Oxford Dictionary*.

39. **sal volatile:** "The horns of the hart and ox were formerly much used as a source of ammonia, and the products of the distillation were employed in medicine under the name of sal volatile, volatile salt, hartshorn, or spirit of hartshorn."—*Century Dictionary*.

46. **Lud:** corruption of *Lord*.

71. **rout:** large social gathering.

201. **coz:** contraction of *cousin*, used often familiarly when no such relationship exists.

231. **illiterate:** obliterate.

248. **extirpate:** exculpate.

249. **controvertible:** incontrovertible.

277. **intricate:** obstinate (?)

283. **black art:** necromancy. See *Century Dictionary*.

285. **misanthropy:** misanthropist.

297. **an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge.** Critics have pointed out the similarity between this speech and one from the first scene of Colman's *Polly Honeycombe*: "A man might as well turn his daughter loose in Covent-Garden, as trust the cultivation of her mind to a circulating library." See Nettleton's Introduction, iv.

302. **laconically:** ironically.

308. **progeny:** prodigy.

318. **ingenuity:** ingenuousness.

319. **supercilious:** superficial.

322. **contagious:** contiguous.

324. **orthodoxy:** orthography.

327. **reprehend:** comprehend.

330. **superstitious:** superfluous.

366. **illegible:** ineligible.

377. **intuition:** tuition, *i.e.* keeping or instruction.

400. **malevolence:** benevolence.

402. **locality**: loquacity.

421. **paduasoy**: a silk stuff named from Padua and the French word *soie*, meaning silk.

ACT II

SCENE I

40. **chairmen**: bearers of the sedan chairs. **minority waiters**: "waiters out of employment, in humorous allusion to a political minority, as being out of office."

—*Century Dictionary*.

98. **reversion**: "a right or hope of future possession or enjoyment."

191. **Mall**: the broad promenade; usually refers to the Mall in St. James Park, London.

210. **German Spa**: originally a watering-place in Belgium, then any watering-place.

272. Is not music the food of love? Referring to the first line of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*:

"If music be the food of love, play on."

289. **catches**: "An unaccompanied round for three or more voices, written as a continuous melody." See *Twelfth Night*, II, 3. **glees**: "A composition for three or more solo voices, without accompaniment."—*Century Dictionary*.

338. **managed**: trained in a riding school. Cf. Orlando's opening speech in *As You Like It*.

354. **looby**: *lubber*, doltish fellow.

375. **frogs**: ornamented embroidered loops to secure the coat or cloak.

376. **tambours**: "a circular frame on which silk or other stuff is stretched for the purpose of being embroidered, so-called from the resemblance to a drum."

—*Century Dictionary*.

405. the oath should be an echo to the sense. "A parody on Pope's Essay on Criticism:

"The sound must seem an echo to the sense."

Note by Aitken, Temple edition *The Rivals*, p. 168.

546. **Cox's Museum:** popular exhibition of curiosities of the day. See Frances Burney's novel, *Evelina*, letter 23.

610. **turnspit:** "A kind of dog of small size, formerly used to work a kind of treadmill-wheel, by means of which a spit was turned."—*Century Dictionary*.

SCENE II

40-46. **incentive:** instinctive; **induction:** seduction; **superfluous:** superficial; **punctuation:** compunction (?) **punctilio** (?); **infallible:** ineffable.

ACT III

SCENE II'

3. **accommodation:** recommendation. **ingenuity:** ingenuousness.

16. **ineffectual:** intellectual.

30. **pine-apple:** pinnacle (?)

41-53. **exploded:** exposed (?); **conjunctions:** injunctions; **preposition:** proposition; **particle:** article; **hydrostatics:** hysterics; **persisted:** desisted; **interceded:** intercepted.

99-101. **reprehend:** apprehend (?); **oracular:** vernacular; **derangement:** arrangement; **epitaphs:** epithets.

269. **Allegory:** alligator.

SCENE IV

5. **monkerony:** a mistake by David for *macaroni*, a common word of that time for dandy.

6. **print-shops:** shops in which prints are sold.

24-25. **balancing, chasing, boring:** terms used in dancing.

34. **coupee:** a forward motion in dancing.

43. **allemandes:** a lively dance, supposed to have come from Germany.

49. **Antigallican:** opposed to what is Gallic or French.

60. **Jack-a-lantern:** will-o'-the-wisp.

131. the milk of human kindness in my breast. Apparently Acres knows his Shakespeare. Cf. Lady Macbeth's speech in *Macbeth*, I, v.

133. I could do such deeds. Evidently a misquoting of Shakespeare's lines:

" . . . now could I drink hot blood,
and do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on."

Hamlet, III., 2, 1. 408.

168. **King's-Mead-Fields**, toward the southwest of the city of Bath, formerly a part of the ancient royal demesne.

ACT IV

SCENE I

12. **quarter-staff** or **short-staff**: quarter-staff, "a long and stout staff formerly used as a weapon of defence and offence; so-called because in holding it, one hand was placed in the middle and the other between the middle and the end." See Scott's *Ivanhoe*, Chap. 2, and the familiar ballad "Robin Hood and Little John."

13. **sharps and snaps**: "Sharppers."

26. this honour seems to me to be a marvellous false friend. An echo of Falstaff's remarks upon the subject, in *Henry IV*, Part I, V., 1.

105. **St. George**: the patron saint of England. "Many legends were connected with his name during the Middle Ages, the most notable of which is the legend of his conquest with the dragon (devil) and the delivery from it of the king's daughter, Sabra (Church)."

SCENE II

7. **caparisons**: comparisons

16. **physiognomy**: phraseology.

20. **Hesperian curls**:

"Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,
An eye, like Mars, to threaten or command,

A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill."

—*Hamlet*, III., 4, 1. 56 ff.

24. **similitude**: simile.

60. **regimentals**: military uniforms.

65. **affluence**: influence.

199. **compilation**: appellation.

222. *Youths the season made for joy*. The first line in a song from John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, then extremely popular.

317. **analyzed**: paralyzed.

SCENE III

66. **Spring Gardens**: favorite pleasure resort on the east side of the river.

ACT V

SCENE I

198. **ladder of ropes**: a ladder made of ropes, not an uncommon contrivance for the eloping lovers in romance.

"Know, noble lord, they have devis'd a mean
How he her chamber-window will ascend
And with a corded ladder fetch her down."

—*Two Gentlemen of Verona*, III., 1, 1. 33 ff.

199. **Scotch parson**. Eloping couples frequently went to Scotland to be married. In Goldsmith's *The Good-Natured Man* Leontine and Olivia attempt such an elopement.

238. **simulation**: dissimulation.

240. **antistrophe**: catastrophe.

261. **perpendiculars**: particulars.

287. **fire-office**: in English usage the office of a fire insurance company. David appears to misuse the word much as Mrs. Malaprop might have misused it.

289. **favour**: the early sense of the word, *look*, or *appearance*.

301. participate: precipitate.

310. Putrifactions: petrifications. Many strange rock formations are to be found in Derbyshire.

318. exhort: escort.

319. envoy: convoy.

SCENE II

2. A sword seen in the streets of Bath . . . The wearing of swords in the streets of Bath was prohibited by law.

SCENE III

40. Abbey: the Abbey Church at Bath.

272-274. dissolve: solve; illuminate: elucidate.

285. Vandyke: vandal.

342. New Rooms, "built in the Upper Four near the circus, and there were complaints that the residents in that position of the city were inclined to separate themselves from their neighbors."—Aitken's note in Temple edition of *The Rivals*.

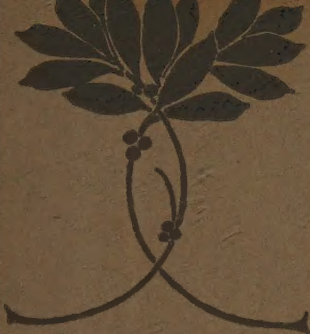
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